KASHMIRIS FIGHT—FOR FREEDOM

Volume I

(1 8 1 9 — 1 9 4 6)

MUHAMMAD YUSUF SARAF
(Chief Justice, A. K. High Court)

1st Edition

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To
my wife
BANO
who suffered
long, lonely hours
while I worked on the book

THE DEBT OF GRATITUDE

I am thankful to Mr. Muhammad Maqbool Sheikh, Mr. A. H. Suhrawardy, Mr. Masih-uz-Zaman, Sh. Manzoor Elahi, Mr. Ijlal Haider Zaidi, Mr. Sarfaraz Hassan, Mr. Ijlal Hussain and Mr. Hassan Zaheer, Chief Secretaries of the Azad Kashmir Government since 1969 who, as *ex-officio* Chairmen of the Committee, were helpful in sorting out various problems and for the encouragement and support that I received from them. I am particularly grateful to Mr. Ijlal Haider Zaidi and Mr. Ijlal Hussain for their abiding interest in the venture and the resolute support they gave in warding off veiled and unveiled attempts by interested quarters to kill the book. But for their sustained interest, the book could have perhaps not seen the light of day. I am also thankful to Dr. Bingle of the India Office Library, London where I conducted research for a few weeks, Miss Marjorie Simpson of the British Museum, Mr. Zia-ul-Haque and Mr. Aslam of the Punjab Public Library, Mr. N. A. Rizvi, Director Intelligence and the Librarian of the Intelligence Library Rawalpindi which treasures, perhaps, the best collection of books on recent Kashmir history, Col. Muhammad Khan, Honorary Librarian and the Assistant Librarian of the Central Army Library Rawalpindi, Director United Nations Information Centre Islamabad, Librarian, Department of Information Library, Rawalpindi, Dr. A. S. Qasimi, Librarian, Peshawar University Library, Mr. A. Rahim, Librarian, Punjab University Library Lahore, Mrs. Nafisa Ahmed, Resident Director, Pakistan Council Centre, Rawalpindi, Mr. Anees-ur-Rehman Siddiqi, Librarian Dayal Singh Public Library Lahore, Mr. Nazir Ahmed, Director Archives, Punjab Government Record Office Lahore, Mr. Sajjad Hussain, Librarian Secretariat Library Muzaffarabad, Mr. Abdul Aziz Qureshi, Principal and the Librarian of the Government College Library Muzaffarabad, Mr. Asghar Ali Mir of the Press Information Department, Rawalpindi, Dr. Jehangir Khan of the Research Institute, Lahore, Kh. Mohammad Asaf, Chief Editor, Pakistan Times, Mr. Naseer A. Sheikh for permission to examine the CMG files and Sh. Ahmed Hassan, Principal Information Officer of the Government of Pakistan and one of the most conscientious and charming public servants I have come

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The title page is half-a-century old pencil sketch of a Kashmiri labourer, drawn by an unknown English visitor, now in the possession of Khawaja Ghulam Mohammad Lone. It was available through the courtesy of Commander Ghulam Nabi Dar. The Ferozsons' artist Mr. Butt has worked hard to put it into its present shape. I am very grateful to them all.

I would be failing in my duty if I do not place on record my grateful thanks to the officers of this Court, Khawaja Ghulam Ahmed, Registrar, Mr. Ghulam Hussain Awan, Deputy Registrar, Mr. Muzaffar Malik, Mr. Mohammad Zulf Khan, Mr. Mohammad Afsar Khan, Mr. Abdul Kabir Qureshi, Mr. Altaf Hussain and Raja Ghulam Mohammad Khan for taking dictation of the book. I am particularly grateful to Mr. Mohammad Zulf Khan, one of the most outstanding Officers in AK Service, for the final proof reading as well as supervision of its printing at Lahore and to Raja Ghulam Mohammad Khan, a fine typist, for typing the final type-script.

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M. YUSUF SARAF
High Court,
Muzaffarabad.

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THE AUTHOR

Born in Baramula in 1923; graduated from the St. Joseph's College, Baramula; took M. A. (History) and LL.B. from Aligarh in 1948. Started practice at Mirpur in 1949 and raised (the first from the Bar) to the Bench in 1969. Appointed a Member of the Judicial Board (Supreme Court) on 15th March 1975; Chief Justice of the Azad J & K High Court since 10th May, 1975.

President of the St. Joseph's College Students' Union and President of the Kashmir Youth Congress, 1943-45; Secretary for States and Member Working Committee, of the All-India Students Congress (1944-45); General Secretary of the Reception Committee for the Sopore annual session of Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah's National Conference (1945) which was attended by Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru, Mrs. Indira Gandhi and others; joined the J & K Muslim Conference in August 1945 and was twice its General Secretary in 1946 and 1953-54; in 1959 when the Muslim Conference was dissolved and a Steering Committee appointed instead, elected General Secretary of the Committee; Founder-member of the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation League; drafted and introduced the his-

toric resolution in the M. C. Convention in Srinagar in 1947, demanding accession to Pakistan; Director of the M. C. Publicity Bureau at Lahore in 1947; detained in 1958 for 3½ months at Montgomery, Rawalpindi and Goragalli in connection with Chaudhri Ghulam Abbas's Cross the Cease-fire Line Movement, of which he was Secretary-General; contributed about a hundred articles on Kashmir to the Pakistan Times, the Civil and Military Gazette and the Guardian.

A member of the Electoral Rolls and Polling Sub-Committee set up by the Pakistan Government in 1949 in connection with plebiscite in Kashmir; has also been a member of the Azad Kashmir Radio Advisory Committee and the Azad Kashmir Administration Advisory Committee set up by the Pakistan Government; Chairman of the A. K. Laws Adaptation and Scrutiny Committee, 1969; Vice-Chairman of the A. K. Islamic Laws Committee 1973 whose recommendations on the Penal Law have since been largely codified; Chairman A. K. Law Commission, 1976; Chairman, A. K. National Committee for Iqbal Centenary Celebrations, 1977 and Chairman, cumpulsorily retired Gazetted Officers Review Board, 1977.

PREFACE

It has been truly said that strange are the ways of fate. Eleven years ago when I suggested the setting up of a Committee to collect source-material and, if advisable, to write a history of the freedom struggle, I could not even imagine that ultimately, the book will be written by me.

It was October, 1966 when during a meeting I had with the then President, Khan Abdul Hamid Khan, I suggested the appointment of a Committee to write a history of the Kashmiri Muslims' struggle for freedom. I was then a practising Advocate at Mirpur and was professionally so busy that I could not even think of taking up the responsibility of writing the book myself. The President liked the idea and asked me to put down the suggestion in writing. Consequently I wrote him the following letter on the 29th of October, 1966:—

"Respected Sir,

I think it is realised on all hands that it is essential to preserve the history of our freedom struggle.

The main source material is mostly unwritten. It is treasured in the hearts of a generation which is fast getting extinct. A few years more indifference would mean the end of it.

May I suggest that the Government set up a Committee of really competent and industrious persons to atleast collect the source material and if so advised, write down the epic. I have no doubt that it will not involve an annual expenditure of more than five thousand rupees.

If we cannot liberate Kashmir for some time, let us at least preserve the records of the struggle for its liberation. If called upon to assist in any capacity, I shall be glad to oblige".

On 14th November, 1966 the President appointed a Committee with the Senior Secretary as *ex-officio* Chairman. The order stated:—

"During my last tour of Mirpur, Khawaja Muhammad Yusuf Saraf, Advocate met me and pointed out that a history of Kashmir for the period 1931 upto date should be written and that a Committee should be constituted to handle the task. I agreed with him and order that a Committee consisting of the following gentlemen should take up the task in hand."

The Committee consisted of the following:—

1.	The Chief Secretary	*Ex-officio Chairman*
2.	Prof. Sahibzada Hassan Shah, then Registrar of the Islamabad University and former Director of Research, Kashmir Government	Member.
3.	Syed Nazir Hussain Shah, Advocate, *Ex*-Minister	Member.
4.	Sh. Muhammad Saleem, retired I. G. Police Advocate, Sialkot.	Member.
5.	Prof. M. A. Aziz, *Ex*-Minister	Member.
6.	Khawaja Muhammad Yusuf Saraf, Advocate	Member.
7.	Khawaja Ghulam Ahmed Pandit, Director Information.	Secretary

Some meetings were held thereafter and a search started for an Editor to write down the book but nothing positive was achieved until I joined service in April, 1969 when I was appointed a Judge of the High Court. On the eve of his transfer from Muzaffarabad, Mr. Maqbool Ahmed Sheikh, C.S.P., the then Chief Secretary, proposed, *in my house*, that I accept appointment as Editor-in-Chief-*cum*-Author of the proposed book. He had his own problems. He had collected Rs. 40,000 from the banks on his personal initiative and wanted to ensure that it was not ultimately spent else-where and was, therefore, keen that someone should shoulder the responsibility of writing the book before he handed over his charge. After thinking over the matter for two days, I accepted the responsibility. A gentleman, it was not possible to refuse his persuation. Besides, I thought that it would be my humble contribution to the struggle for freedom. This is how:

قرعہ فال بنام من دیوانہ زدند ۔

When the first meeting was convened on the 5th of January, 1967, I was unable to attend due to professional pre-occupations but in course of a letter containing certain suggestions for consideration by the Committee, I suggested that the finances for the project be raised exclusively from the scheduled banks working in Azad Kashmir. The idea was to keep the Committee independent of the executive influence and enable it to steer clear of the changing political moods and requirements of the successive Governments at Muzaffarabad. The suggestion was accepted and consequently a sum of Rs. 40,000 was contributed by the following banks:

		Rs.
1.	The National Bank of Pakistan, Muzaffarabad ...	15,000
2.	The United Bank of Pakistan, Muzaffarabad ...	15,000
3.	The Muslim Commercial Bank of Pakistan, Muzaffarabad	10,000

In 1976 the Banking Council of Pakistan, which comprises the scheduled banks of the country, made a joint donation of rupees one lac to meet part expenses of the printing etc. We are grateful to these Banks and particularly to Mr. Pir Bhai, then Chairman Banking Council, for his personal interest and the speed with which our request was accepted. Not a single penny from the public exchequer is involved in the venture.

It needs to be emphasized that no source-material, whatsoever, was available from the Government. The dictation of the book began in August, 1970 and the draft was ready by March 1974. It was during summer vacations mostly, that there was substantial progress in advancing the draft. However, the work remained suspended till the beginning of 1976, for several reasons. In April, 1976 the then Premier, Mr. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto visited Muzaffarabad. In a pre-dinner sitting when the Azad Kashmir President and Prime Minister told him about the book, Mr. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto asked me to expedite its publication and graciously offered to secure any book I needed, 'within fifteen days' of the transmission of a request to his Secretariat. Thereafter, Mr. Ijlal Hussain, Chief Secretary, took keen interest in bringing about its publication. At my request he convened a meeting of the Senior Executives of the Scheduled Banks operating in A.K. and went personally to Karachi to pursue their recommendation for a donation of rupees one lac. I owe it myself to state emphatically that but for the keen interest and extremely helpful attitude of Mr. Ijlal Hussain and Mr. Ijlal Haider Zaidi, it would not have been possible to complete the job, at least for several years more.

The Committee members reviewed the type-script and brought to my notice certain facts pertaining to different periods which were not

within my knowledge and which have been largely incorporated in the book. The book thus being a solo effort, the responsibility for the narration, whether right or wrong, is entirely mine. The members have contributed towards its improvement but the defects, of whatever nature, are solely my responsibility. I am grateful to them for their pains-taking review, their useful suggestions and the whole-hearted co-operation that I always received from them. I must particularly express my gratefulness to Prof. Sahibzada Hassan Shah and Syed Nazir Hussain Shah for their co-operation and guidance, without which it would have been difficult to place the book in the hands of the readers for some time more.

I wrote to Lords Mountbatten and Radcliffe for interviews so that the points that have blurred their image in our country could be brought to their notice and enable the writer to convey to the Pakistan readership what they might have to say. Viscount Radcliffe chose not to acknowledge my registered letter but Lord Mountbatten did kindly send a reply in which he:—

1. Referred me to Hodson's Book, the Great Divide, which I had already read.
2. Declined a personal interview as of no avail.
3. Asked for the portion of the book dealing with him and offered to give his comments; or
4. Asked for questions which he offered to answer.

I am grateful to the Lord for his readiness to offer comments or answer questions on his role, but it would not have served my purpose as an author because the answers or comments would have necessitated further questions and so on, as is my experience as a Judge and as a Lawyer and without a face-to-face interview, it would have taken us nowhere.

I have made a departure from the growing recent practice in the manner, citations are referred to, but have no apology to tender. It has been said:

ہرچہ بر خود نہ پسندی بر دیگران مپسند

The departure that I have made is not only by giving the name of the author or the book on the very page where a quotation is cited but also to give, as far as possible, the verbatim reproduction of the quotation. This I have done because, as a reader, I have felt inconvenience when a citation has to be searched from the appendices and I have always myself wished to read the citation in the words of the author himself. And that

is why I have made a departure from what is termed as the modern methodology.

The book which is being published in two volumes is spread over about 1400 pages. No author has so far covered the political history of this period (1819 to 1976) in more than a hundred pages. The source material since 1931 generally and since 1947 particularly, is mostly unwritten. A conflict of versions is, therefore, inevitable. This raises a most difficult problem which is inherent in writing contemporary history. It has been said that the contemporary history alone is the best history and frankly speaking, I am personally a convert to this view. A student of history myself which was also the subject for my M. A., I have found repeatedly that the past histories are the exaggerated accounts of the victors and generally speak nothing but ill of the vanquished. I am particularly fed-up with the numbers of the combatants, the dead and the destroyed etc. etc. It is unfortunately the way of history to talk in terms of thousands just by the way. Thus while on the one hand, a contemporary historian has not only different versions before him but has also personal knowledge, at least as an observer, and is thus in a better position to judge at least what is nearer the truth but at the same time he suffers from a grave disadvantage in that some of the actors are alive, who are also in a position to damage and injure him and also because the history being very recent or current, large sections of people have a prejudiced view about the events as they are sentimentally involved one way or the other. It was particularly difficult for me who is not only in service but is also employed in a department entrusted with the job of holding the scales of justice. When the type-script had crossed only 700 pages, certain administrative difficulties arose and I requested the Chairman to relieve me of the job and in my letter, told him that for a Government servant to write a contemporary history was like committing harakiri. I am not the best judge in the matter as it is for the readers to decide as to whether it was fool hardiness or sheer courage of conviction or the clarity of conscience that was responsible for my decision to undertake the responsibility and that sustained me throughout these years when the book became controversial even before its publication and when it was clearly known that some people have been sharpening their arrows to rain them like a shower, when it is out. Who are these critics? They can be divided into six categories:

1. Actors themselves.
2. Partisans of the Actors.
3. Personal enemies of the author.
4. Those who seek an elephant for a fly.
5. People motivated by jealousy.
6. Honest critics who have no personal axe to grind.

It is only the last category of critics who count with me and whose comments I invite in all humility and with the promise to consider them and seek guidance from them if and when, Insha Allah, the book goes through a reprint.

I confess that it is not wholly possible for a historian to remain detached but then that is not the case only with contemporary history; that is the case with the entire history, at any period of time. Mr. Hodson has rightly said in his introduction to his important book, the Great Divide:

> " But I reflect that every historian however impartial and careful of truth, as I have tried to be, must have a personal point of view, without which history is anaemic and my view point cannot but be British."

The historian is an observer, who is to watch and judge the performance of each actor. He should be fair and balanced and fair even to those whom he does not like or who are not his personal heroes. The reader alone is the best judge to determine as to whether my efforts to this end have or have not succeeded. I am a human being and perfection is not an attribute of human skill. He is bound to err, for it is human to err. However, in our country, we not only suffer from acute intolerance but the human failing of self-righteousness has crossed all decent boundaries; while we condemn others unreservedly and uncharitably, for ourselves, we assume the monopoly of truth, although it is nobody's monopoly. What afterall, one may ask, is the truth? For a historian, it is what he and not what the partisan, believes, to be the truth.

I have no doubt in my mind that I have been fair, very fair to everyone. I have avoided mud-slinging and have not resorted to digs. Still if anyone feels hurt, I express my regrets. I am already on notice from several quarters and the reader will surely sympathetically watch the trials and tribulations that I will have to undergo in the 11-years service should I live that long, that is still in my account, for having earned the displeasure of some of the Heroes by writing a true, factual and impartial account. However, what matters is not how charged with punishments the scroll is but that the TRUTH must, inevitably, prevail in the end.

Doubtless, it is going to be a fiercely controversial book, as it is not meant to satisfy the partisans, to say the least of the participants. Perhaps that is natural, as a Historian has no Hero, no friend and no enemy. To him, all are like characters in a drama and his job is to record their per-

formance, for good or for worse, so that the successive generations may learn from the experiences of their predecessors, follow their good actions and avoid their pitfalls. That is why it has been said that "unless history is presented to us truly, it had better not been presented to us at all". Any way:

ہر چہ بادا باد ما کشتی در آب انداختیم

Dated 1-11-1977

M. YUSUF SARAF
High Court,
Muzaffarabad,
Azad Kashmir.

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CHAPTER INDEX

THE LAND ... AND ITS PEOPLE

CHAPTER 1

The Land

Jammu and Kashmir State as it constituted on the 14th of August, 1947, had an area of 82258 sq. miles. In the 1891 census, the area was recorded as being 80900 sq. miles. The same figure was repeated in the 1901 census. In 1911 it was shown as 84258 sq. miles but the Census Commissioner for 1941 urged its reduction to 82258 sq. miles[1]. In the 1961 census, with an eye on its dispute with China regarding the fixation of the actual boundary line which had already assumed the shape of a smouldering fire, India raised it to 86024 sq. miles. It will be recalled that the Indo-Chinese border dispute has already resulted in a small war in 1962 when Nehru ordered his troops to evict the Chinese from the posts in their possession.

The area covered by the northern regions comprising Ladakh, Astore, Baltistan and Gilgit is 63554 sq. miles. Thus the remaining area of the State, comprising the provinces of Kashmir and Jammu is 20917 sq. miles, out of which the territory constituting Azad Kashmir has an area of 4144 sq. miles only. The Indian-occupied part in these two provinces comes to 16773 sq. miles. The total area of Kashmir province is 8539 sq. miles out of which only 1646 sq. miles (in the district of Muzaffarabad) is under the control of the Azad Kashmir Government. The total area of Jammu province is 12378 sq. miles out of which only 2498 sq. miles constitute the liberated territory. Even the districts of Mirpur, Muzaffarabad and Poonch, as they constituted on 14th August, 1947 have 1528 sq. miles in Indian occupation.

In the Northern areas, the liberated territory comprises 29,814 sq. miles which is less than half of the region's total area. Under the

1 Alastair Lamb p. 17

extensive administrative reorganisation recently carried out, it has been divided into the following five districts :

1. *Askardu*.
2. *Ganche*.

Both are together known as Baltistan. While Askardu district was previously a tehsil, Ganche comprises Kharmang and Khaplu. River Shyok, a tributary of Indus, separates the two districts.

3. *Gilgit*. It embraces the former Gilgit tehsil, Hunza and Nagar.
4. *Diamir*. The word 'Diamir' means a den of lions. It comprises the sub-divisions of Chilas, Astore, Tangir and Darel.
5. *Ghizer*. It is situate in the vicinity of Chitral, towards Pamir and comprises Gupis, Punial, Ashkoman and Yasin.

The area of Kashmir valley which is wholly under Indian occupation, is 6131 sq. miles. On the Rawalpindi-Srinagar road, it begins from Baramula town which is nearly 40 miles from the Cease-fire line and 77 miles from Muzaffarabad, the capital of Azad Kashmir. Known as the gate-way of Kashmir, it alone provides a natural, round-the-year link with the outside world. The State has common frontiers with China on the north and north-east, Afghanistan on the north-west and with Pakistan and India on the western and southern sides. The border with Pakistan is 580 miles long. The liberated territory has 599.1 Kilometers (approx : 370 miles) long broder with China.[1]

While entering the State one comes across a ridge 1000 to 2000 feet high. Then there are small valleys followed by a parallel ridge, 3 to 4 thousand feet high. Then come mountains 8000 to 10000 feet high. In between them are forests and pastures. Some of the valleys between them are 2500 feet high. Then there are higher mountains in the south-east and north-west which divide the drainage of Chenab and Jhelum from Indus. A land of sky-high mountains, its perpetually snow-clad majestic peaks provide a fascination unsurpassed anywhere. Towards the north are 150 miles of the great Himalayan mountains, the highest being Nanga-Parbat (26660 feet or more than five miles high). It is situate in Astore in the liberated territory. This range which runs from the north-west to the south-east direction, treasures perpetual snow. An off-shoot of the great chain is the Zanskar range starting from Nampa. It rises upto 20000 feet and separates the valley of Indus from that of Jhelum and Chenab. Peaks like Gasherbrum (26100 feet) and Masherbrum (25660 feet) are in this range. Another off-shoot is the north Kashmir range

1. Information furnished by Pakistan foreign office through the courtesy of Sh. Ahmad Hassan PIO.

which separates the Jhelum valley from the Kishanganga valley; Haramukh peak (16980 feet) is in this range. The Himalayas which are 1500 miles long and about 150 miles in width raise 22 rivers. The range which raises the five Punjab rivers is 350 miles long. Among them, Indus, Jhelum, Chenab and Ravi flow through Kashmir. The other famous mountains in this region are Nunkun peak (23500 feet); Dome peak in Zanskar (23500 feet), Montenieve Penitente (19500 feet), and Barmal peak (20500 feet). Beyond the Himalayas is the Karakoram range which starts in Baltistan and extends towards Tibet. At least thirty of the 300 miles long snow-peaks in the range are above 24000 feet and several over 27000 feet. Other mountains in the range are the famous K2, the second highest in the world (28250 feet), also known as Mount Godwin Austin after the name of Mr. Godwin Austin, a surveyor in the Government of India who surveyed this area, and Rakha Poshi (25500 feet).

The Nanga Parbat range runs between Astore and Chilas rivers; both ultimately fall into Indus. For ten miles, the ridge is above 22000 feet. On the southern and eastern sides it descends by about six to ten thousand feet. Although the neighbouring mountains are 16000 feet, yet they actually look like dwarfs. Then for sixty miles this ridge comes down to an average of 14000 feet. After eighty miles, the mountains again rise to an average height of 17000 to 17400 feet. They have enough snow to form glaciers. The peaks again rise to a general height of 20000 feet. After about ten miles, this chain of mountains gets linked with the Pir Panjal range. Thus from Nanga Parbat the ridge is almost un-broken for 120 miles or more, from east to west, with a breadth of 12 to 24 miles. Then there is the Kazinag range which is the name given to the extensive mountainous ridge starting from Baramula on the right bank of Jhelum and extending upto areas beyond Muzaffarabad. At some places the height is 14000 feet but generally it maintains a height of 10000 feet or so. Ten miles from Dras Pass in the northern region, a ridge branches off from the main chain towards the south and passing near the Dal lake in Srinagar, extends upto Tral in southern Kashmir. Among these mountains are Kohenhar (17000 feet) and Gwashbrari (17800 feet). This line curves near Banihal where there is a depression upto 9500 feet and then it links with the Pir Panjal range which is 11400 feet high. It is nearly 180 miles long and 30 miles wide and extends from Muzaffarabad through Poonch to Reasi. The highest mountain in the range is the 15524 feet high Tattakuti. Near Gulmarg the range is about 12500 feet high. From the Pir Panjal range branches off another ridge known as the Rattan range which eventually links with Banihal range.

The northern region, particularly Baltistan, treasures some of the biggest glaciers outside the Arctic region, the greatest being the Siacheu. Another one known as Baltoro is 35 miles long. Among other important glaciers are Arandu, Tarshing, Saichar, Rendu, Saltore and Murghisthong. Biafo and Hisper glaciers in Ladakh form an unbroken stretch of ice, fifty miles long.

These silvery-snow peaks have lured hundreds of mountaineers from Europe, America and Japan since over a century; some of them even paid with their lives. Perhaps the first to explore the area was Mr. Moore who was here in 1870. An American lady who visited the region in 1900 or so fell in a cave near Amarnath. She had to pass the night in the cave and got soaked in a miniature water-fall. She was lucky to find some fuel inside to keep herself warm. Mrs. Bullock and her doctor husband scaled a Nun Kun peak in 1900. Sillen and his Dutch wife climbed a 17500 feet high peak in 1902 and spent ten days there. K2, which had naturally been the main focus of attack, defied human endeavours until after partition and could be humbled only after the leader of the Himalayan range—Mount Everest—the highest point (29028 ft.) on the globe's surface, named in 1852 after Sir George Everest, Surveyor-General of India—was conquered after eight attempts and three reconnaissances beginning in 1921, on 29th May, 1953—on the eve of Queen Elizabeth's coronation.[1] She was awakened at night to be told of the auspicious news. K2 was conquered on 31st July, 1954 by two members of an Italian expedition, Achille Compagnoni and Lino Lacedelli under the leadership of Ardito Desio. One of the team-members, Mario Puchoz lost his life.[2] Nanga Parbat (26,660 feet) is regarded as the most treacherous mountain in the Himalayan range because of its heavy toll of climbers. It claimed 31 lives over a period of 60 years ending 1953. It was finally scaled on 4th July, 1953 by Hermann Buhl, member of an Austro-German expedition. Sixteen mountaineers were lost in a single accident when an avalanche trapped members of a 1937 German expedition.[3]

Kashmir valley is averagely 5300 feet above sea-level while the hill-stations, Gulmarg, Sonamarg and Pahalgam are between seven to nine thousand feet high. In Baltistan some valleys are about 11000 feet high while there are in Ladakh, plateaus as high as 16000 feet. The climate, therefore, is not the same everywhere. In Ladakh it is almost arctic whereas in Poonch and Jammu it is tropical. In Kashmir valley the normal temperature in July is 87.8°F.

1 Encyclopaedia Britannica V. 8 p. 902 & V. 15 p. 952.
2 Encyclopaedia Britannica V. 15 p. 953.
3 Encyclopaedia Britannica V. 15 p. 953.

The average rain-fall is 7" in Indus valley, 27" in Jhelum valley, 42" in Jammu plains, 71" in Sonamarg and 3" in Leh. At Srinagar the mean temperature in January is 33.1 degrees; in August it ranges from 25.3 degrees in Srinagar to 75 degrees at Askardu. At Leh it is 17.7 degrees to 61.8 degrees and in Gilgit from 38.6 to 85 degrees in July. The average rainfall in the valley is 9.4". In Poonch it is 35.7" and in Muzaffarabad 26.8" a year.

Snowfall in the Valley is normally 3 to 4 feet. At times it has been as much as ten feet but on the peaks even now it is not less than nine feet. Muzaffarabad city too receives a snowfall, usually towards the end of January but it is not more than nine inches or so.

The following chart will denote the height and location of important places in the State:—

City	*Latitude*	*Longitude*	*Height above Sea Level*
Srinagar	34.05 N	74.50 E	5205 feet
Gulmarg	34.03 ,,	74.24 ,,	8709 ,,
Leh	34.09 ,,	75.46 ,,	11529 ,,
Askardu	35.18 ,,	75.37 ,,	7505 ,,
Gilgit	35.35 ,,	74.22 ,,	4890 ,,
Sonamarg	34.19 ,,	75.19 ,,	8251 ,,
Gurez	34.38 ,,	74.51 ,,	7930 ,,
Jammu	32.44 ,,	74.55 ,,	1201 ,,
Kargil	34.33 ,,	74.08 ,,	8790 ,,
Muzaffarabad			2300 ,,
Poonch			3300 ,,
Kishtwar			5300 ,,
Bhadarwah			5400 ,,

THE RIVERS

Indus

Indus is known in the sub-continent as "Sind". Its Sanskrit name is "Sindhu" which means ocean; the Greeks called it Sinthos and its Latin name is "Sindhus". The Chinese call it Sanghe Khabab, meaning, the lion-mouthed. Eighteen hundred miles long, *it is one of the principal rivers of the world.* Rising in western Tibet at a height of 17000 feet, its source is about a hundred miles from that of Sutlej and Brahmaputra and is formed by the fusion of two mountain streams. Near Thangra it

cuts across the Ladakh range and continues its northwesterly course between it and the Zanskar range for about three hundred miles. Zanskar river joins it about 12 miles west of Leh; it is joined by the Shyok at Kivis, by Shigar near Askardu and by Gilgit after it has some course past Haramosh. From Chilas it passes through the mountainbelt of Pakistan before it enters Hazara, having already traversed a distance of 812 miles. Near Attock, it is joined by Kabul. It feeds Guddu Barrage, Sukkur Barrage and Ghulam Mohammad Barrage. The river irrigates about one crore twenty five lac acres in Pakistan. With the completion of the Tarbela Dam it is to irrigate a further three lac acres besides generating twenty lac Kilowatts of power—more than the total available hydro-electric supply in Pakistan.

No other river in the world is fed by such a number of great glaciers; no other river collects the drainage of such a number of famous peaks as the K2, Nanga Parbat, Aling Kangri, Trich Mir. Gasher-brum, Sikaram, Rakha Poshi and Takht-i-Sulaiman. The territory through which it passes until it disappears into the Arabian sea, has an area of three lacs and seventy three thousand sq. miles. Its catchment basin in the Himalayan region covers about 1,03,800 miles. Except for a brief area in the plains, it is largely unfit for navigation. It becomes a formidable river only after it is joined by Shyok. It is an extremely fast-going river, especially in the northern regions.

Jhelum

It was known in ancient times as "Vitasta". Alexander's historian, Arrian, called it "Hydaspes". Its Kashmiri name is "Veth" while Ptolemy has described it as "Bidaspas". Muslims named it "Bihat", "Wihat" or "Bihatab". Before joining Chenab at Trimmu, it has a run of about 450 miles.

It has its source in Verinag in southern Kashmir, at a height of nearly 6000 feet, where it begins in the shape of a small stream but by the time it reaches Baramula town, a distance of 102 miles, it assumes the shape of a big river on account of having been joined by its more important tributaries in the Valley, Sind and Lidder. The towns of Islamabad, Srinagar, Sopore, Do-ab-gah, Baramula, Uri and Muzaffarabad in the State, and Jhelum, Pind Dadan Khan, Bhera and Khushab in Pakistan are located on its banks. It is navigable for 90 miles in Kashmir valley. Its level in Kansbal (Islamabad) is 5400 ft. ; at Srinagar it is 5235 feet and on the shores of Woolar lake it is 5180 feet—a fall of 165 feet in the first thirty miles and 55 feet in the next 24 miles. By the

time it reaches Mangla, a river distance of 190 miles from Baramula, it has a vertical fall of 4000 feet. What a tremendous potentiality for hydro-electricity! In Muzaffarabad it is joined by Kishanganga now known as "Neelum". About seven miles farther it is joined by the river "Kunhar" of Hazara and at Mangla it is joined by river Poonch.

The catchment area above the 1000 feet contour is 13030 sq. miles; the area under glaciers is 142 sq. miles and the average annual run-off is 2,38,60,000 ac. ft.

Before the construction of Mangla Dam, two headworks were built at Mangla and Rasool in Pakistan to feed the Upper Jhelum and the lower Jhelum canals respectively, which together irrigated a vast area known as "Chaj Doab". It also generated about 18,000 kilowatts hydro-electricity in Rasool. With the construction of the Dam and the laying down of a new canal, it is to irrigate about 30,00,000 acres and generate ten lac kilowatts of electricity.

Says Vigne, as quoted by James Milne:

> "The line of beauty was never more faithfully depicted in landscape than by the course of the broad and beautiful Jhelum, the "fabulous Hydaspes" of the Augustan Age. So regular, without being too much so, are its windings as it approaches the city (of Srinagar) from the southward; so just are the length and curvature of its sweeps and so well proportioned are its width and the space it occupies, to the extent of the rich savannah through which it flows, so tranquil and lake-like is the surface of the water, that, at first we cannot divest ourselves of the idea that the Nature has called in the assistance of art and has ornamented the scenery beneath us with reference to the most approved principles of landscape gardening."[1]

Miss Percy Brown describes a typical scene on its banks in Srinagar and elsewhere in the Valley:

> "With graceful steps, erect and slow,
> Adown the stone-built broken stair,
> The Panditanis daily go,
> And on their heads held high, they bear,
> Bright vessels, which they stooping fill......

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1 James Milne p. 104.

Then with their slender rounded arms,
They poise the shining lotas high,
In pherans-robed, whose soft folds show
Tints dyed by rays of sunset warm,
Flame, crimson, orange, rose aglow."[1]

Chenab

It was known to Greeks as "Acesines" and to Vedic writers as "Asikni". Actually there are two streams known as "Chandra" and " "Bhagah", which descend from Lahole in the Chamba range towards the south-east and north-west respectively, of the Bara Lacha pass (16,047 feet) in the Himalayas and join at Atboli which is 7500 feet high. It takes leave of the mountains at Akhnoor which is 378 miles of river distance from the pass with a gradual fall of 15500 feet. River Tavi joins it at Head Marala in Sialkot. It enters Pakistan at Khairi Rihal in Gujrat district. Its catchment area above the 1000-feet contour is 10,558 sq. miles including 1475 sq. miles under glaciers.

The Upper Chenab canal is taken off at Marala, only 8 miles from the present Kashmir border and the Lower Chenab canal at Khanki, 35 miles down-stream. The Jhelum, as stated above, joins it at Trimmu and the Ravi near Sidhu after which the joint river is called "Trimab". Its total length upto Panjnad is 559 miles. It has an average depth of 15 feet.

At Salal, a place 7 miles from Reasi, India began construction of a 300-feet high Dam after the signing of the Indus Water Treaty. The river here is quite deep and the rocky hills on both sides provide natural bunds. The lake thus formed will be used not only for generation of electricity but also for irrigation which would reduce the quantity of water that flows into Pakistan. In times of war, it can be used to inundate large areas of land in Sialkot, Gujranwala and Sheikhupura. Part of its water stands already diverted at Akhnoor to feed the Ranbir canal which irrigates large areas in Jammu, Sambha and Ranbirsinghpura. The design of the proposed Dam is under discussion these days and it is hoped that a mutually satisfactory solution will be forthcoming.

From Atboli, where the river takes its shape, it gets the name of Chenab. How did the river get its name, Chenab? Some authors claim that the original name was Chin-ab which was given to it as it was generally

1 Chenar Leaves.

believed that it originated in China. Chin-ab literally means the water from China. I think this may not be the correct position.

It becomes navigable near Akhnoor where it is 1100 feet high. Minawar Tavi, which flows from high hills of Rattan range behind Rajouri and has to be distinguished from simple Tavi which flows through Jammu city, joins it at Beri pattan. The distance between Ravi and Chenab, on entry into Pakistan, is 70 miles. Akhnoor is 18 miles from Jammu city. Before partition, the timber extracted from Udhampur forests used to be floated down through Chenab to Wazirabad where it had a ready market. The cost of transportation was very low.

Ravi

It was known to Sanskrit writers as "Iravati" and as "Hydroates" to Greek historians. It rises in the Kulu sub-division of Kangra district in East Punjab. Flowing through Chamba, it enters Jammu province for a brief sojourn and after traversing the Gurdaspur district, forms the Pakistan-India frontier before finally crossing into Punjab, about 15 miles north-east of Lahore. After flowing a course of about 450 miles from its source, it falls into Chenab about ten miles south of Ahmedpur. Before partition, it had two Head-works, one at Madhopur in East Punjab constructed in 1859 which irrigated 11,77,000 acres, and the other at Balloki completed in 1917 which irrigated about 3,45,000 acres.

Streams, as compared to afore-mentioned rivers, Tawi and Ujh emerge from Baskund lake, about 13 to 14 thousand feet high and nearly 80 miles from Jammu city. Although the source area is not permanently snow-covered, the flow is perpetual. Tawi passes through Udhampur district and flows at a small distance from Jammu city. It joins Chenab at Head Marala. Ujh moves through Jasrota to Kathua where it enters Ravi, at a distance of some 53 miles from Jammu city.

Poonch

River Poonch, an important tributary of Jhelum, which passes through Poonch city, rises from the Pir Panjal range. A small hydro-electric station was built before partition by harnessing the waters of Beytaar, a tributary, and the electricity thus generated was utilised for electrification of Poonch town. After passing near Kotli, it ultimately joined Jhelum near Chomakh where since the construction of Mangla Dam, it enters the lake.

The river is a small one unless flooded by rain in the catchment area but the flow is perpetual.

Neelum

One of the more important tributaries of Jhelum, it has been named 'Neelum'—emerald, by the Azad Kashmir Government. It was previously known as Kishanganga. It rises about forty miles from Gurez among the mountains behind Dras and enters Azad Kashmir about 110 miles from Muzaffarabad. It joins Jhelum at Domel, a suburb, about a mile past Muzaffarabad town. Not navigable at all due to its fast flow, at present it is used only for floating down timber from Keran forests. Its water is very cold and remains so also in summer with the result that hundreds of people flock to its banks in the afternoon to escape the peak hours oppressive heat. At Athmuqam, 52 miles from Muzaffarabad this writer couldn't bear to keep his hands in its ice-cold water on the banks for more than 20 seconds in the third week of May.

MINERALS

The State is extremely rich in minerals. Certain surveys were conducted between 1870 and 1910 by geologists deputed by the Government of India. Their labours were amply rewarded. For instance, at Ladda and Anji in Udhampur district, coal estimated at eleven million tons was discovered in 1907; though mixed with a large quantity of dirt, it could be washed and processed to yield high-grade coal, perhaps similar to that of the Bengal coal. Coal mines, on a small scale, have also been found at Jangagali, Kalakot and Kotli.

Iron ore has been found in large quantities, at Sof in Kashmir valley. It has also been discovered in the Reasi district and has been used successfully in local furnaces for the production of ammunition.

Kashmir has a number of copper mines also. Copper ore is found in the Liddar valley to the south-west of the mountains which divide Kashmir from Suru in Ladakh. Isolated masses of pure copper also exist in the Zanskar river-bed. Lead is found in certain mountain areas of Ladakh. Extraction of lignite is an old established industry at Nichhama (Handwara tehsil) and Badgam. Ladakh abounds in clay and crystalling mica rocks which can be split into slates and used for the construction of roofs for buildings. Mica deposits have also been found at Dhanni area in the Muzaffarabad district. In Ladakh extensive deposits of clay adhere to the sides of ravines and cliffs. Thus, for example, large deposits of such clay are to be found in the depression area of the granite

rocks near Spituk, situated to the south-west of Leh, in a ravine of the Unam river and the Nubra valley in the north. However, the most remarkable deposits of clay are to be found immediately below Lamayuru. Steatite, another mineral deposit, is found on the banks of the Dras river, near Taskyun bridge.

Lime can be obtained from the lime-stone rocks which are abundant on the range that divides Rukshu from Zanskar and further on the banks of the Indus in the Photo and Hanu passes. Lime is also found at both the extremities of the Pangkong lake and in the whole belt extending from Sessar to the high peaks of the Karakoram range.

Kashmir possesses a variety of marble obtained from some of its lime-stones. The fossiliferous lime-stone which was used in the construction of the Shalimar garden pillars, is particularly noted for its fine lustre and polish. A fine variety of striped marble-like Sulaimani stone is found in the bed of the Shyok river between Chong-Ulang and Dong-Bailak in Ladakh. In Hunza and Ladakh small quantities of gold are to be found in the sands of the Indus and the Shyok rivers. Washing of sand is generally done by professional workmen from Askardu or Gilgit, the profession being hereditary and confined only to a few families. Gold is also found in the region of Chang Thang but its extraction seems to have been prevented by some local fear of a supernatural-being, the Genie. Kashmir has large deposits of precious stones as well. Garnets, though of inferior quality and brown in colour, are found at Puga. High-quality saphire was discovered in Zanskar range in 1882. One Major Anderson formed a firm, named "The Kashmir Mining Company" and in 1917 secured a mining and prospecting licence. During a period of three years the Company extracted saphires worth Rs. 1,24,000, out of which 30% was paid to the State as royalty. Nevertheless, the existence of large deposits of crystallized transparent corundum used in grinding precious stones as also for watch jewels, is still suspected. Saphires are found in Paddar district. Besides, there are large deposits of crystallized rocks suitable for ornamental cups, plates and handles. Plumbago, though of inferior quality, is found in Baltistan. Gypsum, both in the form of pure white flakes and compact rock, with crystables of sulphur attached to it, is abundant in the State and is found at the sulphur mines or the banks of the Puga river, on the right bank of Spiti below Rosar and on the banks of Shigar in Baltistan. Gypsum is useful in the preparation of Sulphuric acid, cement and plaster of paris. Sulphur is obtained at the Puga sulphur mine in Ladakh situate at a short distance from the Rulangchu stream. Incidentally this region also harbours many hot water springs. Sulphur occurs either in the form of thin opaque lamina, disseminated throughout the rock, or in the

form of pure transport crystals attached to the gypsum. It used to be exported in large quantities to the distant markets of Nurpur, Kangra and Rampur. Borax is found alongwith Sulphur at Puga on the banks of Rulangchu. Ladakh is the chief borax-producing area in the State· It is thrown up in the form of boracic acid by the numerous hot springs. Doa sub-carbonate is obtained from the saline masses of matter found on the banks of the Thogji Chanmo lake in Rukshu. Muricate, or hydro chlorate of magnesia, is found on the banks of the Tshomoriri lake. Arseno Pyrite occurs in a large quantity in Bhuttna valley in Ladakh. Arsenic is used in glass and pharmaceutical industries.

Copper ore has also been discovered near Nondo in Baltistan and Harpet Bag; Oil shales have been discovered in the foot-hills of Baramula. Aluminium clay and Bauxite have been found lately in Bhimber. It has been said of Kashmir coal that unlike the seams of the Punjab and Baluchistan which are lignitic in character, high in moisture contents and usually high in sulphur, the coal of the southern Kashmir is more highly matured—bituminous to enthracitic in quality.[1]

The Mangla Dam project scheme was sent by the Punjab Government to the Maharaja's Government, a few years before partition. It was approved by the Cabinet but when sent to Maharaja Hari Singh for his approval, the same was not only rejected but the concerned officials were summoned and given a standing order that no plan submitted from outside the State for the setting up of any industry or exploitation of any minerals was in future to be entertained and that all such proposals were to be summarily rejected. Hari Singh was only following in the foot-steps of his uncle, Pratap Singh, who had acted almost with the same end in view in 1909. In 1908, a company named "Kashmir Iron Mines and Power Syndicate" was floated in London by the Earl of Errol, Viscount Church, Sir Robert Herman Hodge and many others. Lord Errol visited Kashmir in 1909 and applied for the grant of a ninety-years lease of the mining belt in Reasi—Udhampur, *undertaking to lay down a railway and build a power house at their own cost.* The permission was declined on the flimsy ground that rules had not as yet been framed but when they were eventually framed, it was done with the deliberate object of warding off any prospective lessees. In these circumstances, the Company naturally declined to take out a lease.[2]

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1 Maneck B. Pithawala.

2 Bamzai 642.

FLORA AND FAUNA

Kashmir has an abundance of extensive forests. It has been estimated that 11000 sq. miles are covered by forests which accounts for 12% of its total area. The 'deodar' (cedrus libanis) is the most valuable species which grows between 5000 and 9000 feet above sea-level. Its growth is better above 6000 feet. The blue-pine grows from 6000 to 10,000 feet above sea-level while silver-fir is found between 8000 to 11000 feet. Above 11,000 feet there are dwarf rhododendrons and junipers. In Baramula district, 345 sq. miles are covered by deodars; in Udhampur it is spread over an area of 198 sq. miles. In Muzaffarabad district 158 sq. miles of forests are covered by deodars. The average girth of the trees is 12 to 18 feet. Pine and Fir occupy 1100 sq. miles while Chil (Pinus Longifolia) cover an area of 473 sq. miles. Mirpur district including Nowshera sub-tehsil, now in Indian occupation, had 220 sq. miles of chil forests. Pinus Longifolia can be found even at 1400 feet but not above 5500 feet. Fair size chil can be found at 2000 feet while whole woods of it exist at 3 to 4 thousand feet but the finer and thicker is the Pinus Excelsa known locally as 'Nandar' which is found normally at 6000 feet. However, 'deodar' is finer than 'nandar' and because of being immune from white-ants, is always in great demand.

In Ladakh, there are no forests, no pastures and not even a blade of grass for miles together. There is no trace of snow in summer even at 15000 feet because Nanga Parbat range absorbs all rainy winds. There are few scattered penialcedars (Juniperus Excelsa). Bootrtsar Eurotia, a plant which grows in Ladakh, is used both for fodder as well as fuel. The greener it is, the better it burns.

Of the trees, apart from 'deodar' (cedrus Libanis), 'chil' (Pinus Longifolia), and Nandar (Pinus Excelsa), there are Oaks Yews (Taxus Baccata) Poplar (Populus alba as well as populus nigra), Vine (Vitis Himalayans). Fir (Abics Webbiana), Pipal, Banyan, Kachil (Picea Morinda), Alder (Alnus Nitida), Elm (Ulmus Walli-Chiana), Bird Cherry (Prunus Padus), Ash (Fraxinus Floribunda), Hazel (Corylus Colurna), Mawthorn (Crataggus Oxyacantha), Willow (Sali tetrasperma), Maple (Acer), Birch (Betula Utilis), Guelder (Viburnum Foetens), Witch Hazel (Parrotia Hacquemontiana), Spindle tree (Euonymus) and the prince of them all—the majestic chinar (Platinus Orientallis) introduced in the Valley, according to popular tradition, by the Mughal Governor, Ali Mardan Khan. Chinars and poplars are so popular that there is hardly a village, a garden, a grave-yard or a path-way which is not adorned by them. What stupendous growth the trees achieve may be judged from the fact that

in Bijbihara, a town on the Srinagar-Islamabad road, in the Chinar garden laid by the Mughals, one has a circumference of 86 feet. Lawrence found a chinar in Lolab valley with a circumference of 63 feet 5 inches, at a height of five feet from the ground. Similarly in the grand grove of stately poplars at the entrance of Gurez valley, which incidentally presents one of the most beautiful sights in the Valley—Gurez itself being a valley of five miles square—Lawrence measured one tree to be 127 feet high with a girth of 14½ feet. In warmer regions which adjoin Pakistan, Shisham, Kikar or Babul (Acacias Arabica), Phulai (Accacias Modesta) and Ber (Zizyphus Jujuba) are a common sight. Sir Walter Lawrence has given a list of 489 plants found in Gulmarg alone by Mr. J.F. Duthie, the then Director of Botanical Survey of India and one Doctor Aitchison. Even this list, according to Lawrence, 'omits perhaps some of the more common plants which occur at Gulmarg'.

Of the fruits, Kashmir valley grows apple (Pyrus Malus), Pears (Pyrus Communis), Walnut (Juglan Regia), Mulberries (Morus Sp.), Pomegranate (Punnica Granatum), Cherries (Prunus Cerasus), Plum (Prunus Communis), Vine (Vitis Vinifera), Almond (Amandula), and Peaches (Persicum Malum). The variety of each fruit may be judged from their classification made by Charles Girdlestone in 1871. He has detailed 26 kind of peaches, 28 kind of apple, 20 kind of grape (vine), 23 kind of almond and 36 kind of jungle fruit. He has also given a list of 77 kind of forest trees which bear no fruit and 13 kind of fish. Most of the fruit gardens are located in Baramula district. The produce found a ready market in Rawalpindi (Pakistan) before partition.

In the warmer regions, such as Mirpur, are grown Mango, Kinu, Loquat, and Maltese oranges. In Poonch there is an abundance of apple, walnut, and pears but the apple, largely, is not of good quality.

The vegetables grown are: Knol-kohl (Brassica oleracea, Karam sag), Turnip (Brassica campestris), Pumpkin (Cucurbita Pepo), Cucumber (Cuceuinis sativas), Tanate (Solonum lycopersicum), Chili (Capsicum sp.), Egg-plant (Solonum Melongena—Bengan), Potato (Solanum Tuberosum), Asparagus (Asparagus officinalis), White bean (phaseolus vulgaris), Endine (Chichorium Endira), Lettuce (Lactuca Satioa), Carrot (Dancus Carota), Onion (Alliuin sp.) Dipsacus inermis (Wopul Hak) etc. and a host of mountain herbs such as thistles, nettles, the wild chikory, the dandelion, the wild rhubard and the dainty wild asparagus. Of course, the knol-kohl is the national vegetable of Kashmiris and wherever they are, it remains, together with rice and salt tea, dearest to their hearts. He is never tired of eating it. In any feast, however great the number of dishes and whatever the delicacies

of chicken, mutton or beaf and however overpowering the appetite, a Kashmiri will instinctively first stretch out his hands towards the Kramihak if it were available. He cannot help it. It is a part of his life, as inseparable from him as his very soul.

The State is also rich in Games. Snow-leopards, stags, ordinary leopards, ibex, markhor, black and brown bear, shappo, burhal, ducks and trouts normally attract the game-lovers. The rifle has played havoc with the forest game. It has largely annihilated it.

In Ladakh and Baltistan are to be found larks, chogs, snow-pigeons, marmots and lizards. In Ladakh, upto 17,000 feet, are found wild asses or kiang (Equus henionus), antelope (pantholaps hodgsini), wild yak (bos grunniens) ibex (capra sibirica) and some kinds of wild sheep (ovis hodgsini), ovis viginici and ovis uahura. Above 17,000 and upto 19,000 feet are found larks, marmots and beautiful snow-leopards (felis unica) and Lynx (Felis Lynx).

In Gilgit we have ibex (capra falconevi), markhor (capra sibirica), snow-ounce (felis unica), wild dog (eyon dukhunesis), the red bear (ursus arctus or isabellinus), the snow-cock (tetraogallus Himalayanus) and grey partridges. In spring are found wild geese, duck and quail; wild sheep are found on lower but barren hills.

The State has at least three thousand species of flowering plants. Among them are lotus, water lilis, daffodil, tulip, irises and wild rose. At eight thousand feet there are columines, forget-me-nots and delphinium. At eleven thousand feet, such as Khillanmarg, there is abundance of rhododendrons. Medicinal herbs are so numerous and plentiful that perhaps they are without a parallel anywhere in the world. Doctor Honigberger, Ranjit Singh's Court Physician has given a long list of these herbs in his book.[1]

Among the crops grown are rice, maize, wheat, barley, saffron (crocus sativus), tobacco, genhar, mung (Phascolus mung), mah (phascolus radiatus) and mothi (phascolus aconitifolius). Among the oil-seeds, we have tilgoghe, taruz, sandiji and til (sesanium indicum). Rice is the most staple. It is of infinite variety. During the Lawrence Settlement, 53 varieties were counted in one village alone. Girdlestone has given a list of 96 varieties. The chief are the white and the red. 'White' is very popular while 'red' is hardy and can be grown on higher elevation. In the valley it is used both times a day whereas in other parts of the State, people either have it once

1 Thirty five Years in the East.

a day or prefer wheat or maize. In the hilly areas of Poonch, Muzaffar-abad and Mirpur, maize is the staple food of the people.

By cultivating barley at a height of 15,000 feet, village Karzok in Rupshu in the northern regions has the distinction of being the highest place in the world where any cultivation takes place.

ROUTES

A glance at the map would show that on the State's eastern, northern and north-western sides, the passage is difficult and that is why these routes have remained almost inaccessible. Same is the case with a major part of the southern side because on all sides stand huge mountains, most of whom remain perpetually under snow and the passes therefore remain closed for greater part of the year. Discussed below are the routes that link the State with the outside world.

1. Sialkot Jammu Banihal Srinagar road

Metalled in 1922, 190 miles are in the State territory. Suchetgarh is about ten miles from Sialkot. Between Udhampur and Kashmir valley, it has to cross the 8985 ft. high Banihal pass. The important places on the road are Udhampur, Kud, Batote, Ramban, Banihal, Kazigund, Pampur, Khanabal, Avantipura, Bijbihara and Srinagar. Batote is a small hill-station, 71 miles from Jammu city and at a height of 5,150 feet. Ramban is situated on the banks of Chenab. Islamabad is 49 miles from Banihal while Srinagar is 32 miles from Islamabad. The road remained closed for about four months during winter because of heavy snow-fall on the pass. The Indian occupation authorities, handi-capped in their military movements, have constructed a two-mile long tunnel at a cost of three crore rupees and at an altitude of 7200 feet in order to maintain an all-weather traffic but even then the road remains closed for days together during winter as well as the rainy season.

Sialkot was linked with Jammu city, before partition, by rail; it was the only rail link with the outside world. It covers a distance of 25 miles and cost rupees 9.6 lacs. In 1905 the Government of India proposed to build a railway line between Rawalpindi and Srinagar to be operated by electricity. The proposed line was even surveyed but despite repeated efforts by the Government of India to go ahead with the execution of the plan, the Maharaja's Government in the beginning delayed its approval on one pretext or another and eventually with the out-break of the First World War,[1] the proposal remained dormant as

1. Imperial Gazetteer of India J. and Kashmir, 1909.

every available penny was diverted towards the war-machine. It was ultimately forgotten in the meteoric growth of political agitation that came in the wake of the Treaty of Versailles. Years after partition, India laid a railway line between Pathankote and Jammu to facilitate quicker transportation of army and its supplies.

2. **Rawalpindi to Srinagar: Jhelum Valley Road**

It is a 200 miles long metalled road, 64 miles are in the Pakistan territory which ends at Kohala, a village 1900 feet above sea-level and connected with the State territory by a vehicular bridge. From Kohala to Srinagar is a distance of 133 miles. From Baramula to Srinagar, a distance of 34 miles, it is bewitchingly beautified by an unbroken chain of majestic poplars on both sides. Knight has described it as one of the most beautiful and lovely roads in the world. The drive is very pleasant and enjoyable. Its supreme importance lies in the fact that besides providing the shortest communication link with the outside world, it is also the only road which remains open throughout the year, irrespective of snow or rain. The highest altitude through which it passes is 5000 feet which is attained only once upto Baramula, at Sunny Bank, about 35 miles from Rawalpindi. As already stated elsewhere. Kashmir valley is enclosed by lofty mountains on all sides except at Baramula which provides the only natural opening for entry into or exit from the Valley. The principal custom-house before 1947 was located at Domel, about 22 miles from Kohala; it accounted for 3/4th of the total income from customs.

The widening of the road was started by the Kashmir Government at the instance of the Government of India somewhere in 1878. The State Public Works Department completed 22 miles only during a period of five years. The contract was then awarded to one Mr. Spedding who completed the rest, a distance of 78 miles, in about two years. It was the favourite tourist route as it provided the shortest road distance to Srinagar or Gulmarg. The figures also show that almost 98% of the Valley's exports such as fruit, silk, Pattu, papiermache, wood-carvings, shawls, carpets, namdas and dry skins etc. were exported through this route. From Kohala upto Baramula, a distance of 99 miles, the road runs on the left bank of Jhelum and quite parallel to the same which by itself is a very fascinating and pleasant experience anywhere in the world. Among the towns that the route touches on its progress, are Muzaffarabad (2,300 feet), Garhi Dopatta (3000 feet), Chinari-Uri-Rampur-Baramula (5100 feet), Pattan and Srinagar. Nine miles behind Srinagar branches off a metalled road to Gulmarg which is about 28 miles from Srinagar and about which Percy Brown, the English poetess has said:

The largest of the towns, apart from Srinagar, is Baramula which had a population of about 15000 in 1941. The Mohura Power-house, the only source of electricity in the Valley in pre-partition days, stood at Mohura, fifteen miles behind Baramula and midway between it and Uri. Constructed in 1907, it was the second hydro-electric project in the sub-continent, the first one having been already completed in Mysore. It was constructed at the personal initiative of the British Resident. It had a capacity of 15000 kilowatts though it generated only 5000 kilowatts. The actual consumption upto 1940 did not exceed 3000 kilowatts. Surveys had revealed that the flow of Jhelum between Buniyar, a village about five miles from Baramula, and Mohura, a distance of about ten miles, was so fast that there was a fall of six hundred feet. So a stream was taken off the river at Buniyar and brought to Mohura at an almost even level, where by making it fall about 400 feet, the electricity in question was generated.

From Abbottabad in Pakistan to Srinagar *via* Muzaffarabad is 156 miles. From Brarkote, the border town, Srinagar is 119 miles only. Abbottabad is 71 miles from Rawalpindi and the road upto Srinagar is open to traffic round the year. It is a metalled road.

3. Gujrat to Bhimber

From Gujrat to Srinagar, *via* Bhimber and Rajouri, is 175 miles. Known as the Mughal route, it is mostly non-vehicular especially between Nowshehra and Shopian. Bhimber is about 28 miles from Gujrat, a city in Pakistan and only six miles from Pakistan-Jummu Kashmir border. From Bhimber the road goes to Saidabad in Samahni valley of Mirpur district and thence to Nowshehra, previously a sub-tehsil of the Mirpur district but now in Indian occupation. From Nowshehra it goes to Changus, then to Rajouri and then to Thana, from Thana to Poshiana and from there to Aliabad which is at a height of 9700 feet, from there to Dubchi and thence *via* Hirpur to Shopian in Kashmir valley. On this route one has to cross first the 8200 feet high Rattan range pass between Thana and Behramgala and then the 11400 ft. high Pir Panjal pass between Aliabad Serai and Hirpur. It remains closed for four months during winter. It fell into dis-use after the construction of the Jhelum Valley road; It was here on the Pir Panjal heights that the notorious white Hun King, Mihirakula, who ruled Kashmir from 515 to 550 A.D. ordered a hundred elephants to be rolled down the slopes of the mountain in order to enjoy their agony, after an elephant had, by accident, agonisingly rolled down the precipice to the amusement of the

tyrant. This also has been the easiest and the historical route for invasion of Kashmir valley. The Huns, the Mughals, the Pathans, the Sikhs and even the Dogras used the same route. It is also known as the salt route.

4. Jhelum-Mirpur-Kotli-Poonch-Uri-Srinagar road

From Jhelum city in Pakistan *via* Mirpur and Poonch to Srinagar is a distance of 255 miles. Mirpur is 28 miles from Jhelum, Mangla being the border town between Pakistan and Jammu and Kashmir State. It was here that Alexander the Great after crossing Jhelum at night, was engaged to a fierce battle by the chief Punjab ruler, Porus. It was also here that Alexander lost his famous horse, Bucephala. Taken in a funeral procession led by Alexander himself, its remains were buried here. Alexander founded two settlements here, Nicaea (city of victory) and Bucephala[1]. Nicaea is still extant as a small village under the same name. Mirpur is only 8 miles from Mangla. From Mirpur to Kotli is 71 miles; then to Sehra 14 miles and from Sehra, Poonch town is 16 miles; from Poonch to Kahuta 7 miles, Aliabad 4 miles, Hajipir, 7 miles and Uri 18 miles, Mohura 14 miles and Baramula 14 miles, and from Baramula, Srinagar is 34 miles. Between Aliabad and Uri one has to cross the 8500 ft. high Haji Pir pass. Snow renders the road difficult for use in winter. The districts of Mirpur and Rajouri and the tehsil of Mendhar depended mainly upon this route both for their contact with the outside world as well as for imports which included most of their daily necessities of life.

5. Azad Pattan road

Another route that links the State with Pakistan is the Azad Pattan road previously known as Lachman Pattan. It is now connected by a vehicular bridge. Rawalpindi is 42 miles from Azad Pattan which is the border between Pakistan and Jammu and Kashmir State. From Azad Pattan, Poonch city is 62 miles. The highest altitude is attained at Trarkhel, the first Headquarter of the Azad Kashmir Government which is about 5000 feet high. It mainly feeds the tehsils of Pallandari, Rawalakot and Haveli.

6. Amritsar-Pathankote-Jammu-Srinagar road

The only regular route that links the State with the Indian Union is the Amritsar-Pathankot-Jammu-Srinagar road. It was constructed after

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1 Robin Lane Fox, p. 357-361.

1947 to provide India with a road link. Pathankot is 68 miles from Jammu city and 54 miles from Amritsar. It means that the distance between Srinagar and Amritsar, the first major town in the Indian Union, is 297 miles and the distance from the fruit mandi of the State—Baramula-is 331 miles. By using the Jhelum Valley road it took a traveller or the goods only six to eight hours to reach Rawalpindi, the first major city in the plains of Pakistan and the traditional market for its imports and exports, whereas the Pathankot route takes not less than thirty six hours to reach Amritsar because one full day is consumed by travel upto Jammu, a difficult road, and another day in covering the remaining 122 miles between Jammu and Amritsar. It may also be noted that this road provides exit from Kashmir valley at a distance of 243 miles whereas the Jhelum-Valley road provides an exit only at a distance of 118 miles if one has to travel to Abbottabad and 133 miles if one has to travel towards Rawalpindi.

7. Seasonal routes linking the State with India

From Madhopur in Indian Union, a route leads to Kishtwar *via* Bhadarwah which is 129 miles. River Ravi is crossed near Basohli. One of the passes to be crossed is Thatardhar which is 10100 feet high. It remains closed for four to five months during winter. It is crossed before entering Bhadarwah. Similarly, another route leads from Palampur by way of Kulu to Leh in Ladakh which is 357 miles long. Palampur is in the heart of tea-growing Kangra district. It is nearly 96 miles from Jullundhur in East Punjab. Chenab is crossed between Rahala and Kaksar and Indus, only a few miles behind Leh. This route enters the State territory at Sarchu whence Leh is 124 miles away. The route wends its way through five passes with heights ranging from ten thousand to more than seventeen thousand feet. It remains closed for seven months on account of snow-fall.

Another route leads from Simla to Leh by way of Wangtu and Spiti. It is 430 miles long. It enters the State at Kyangdum (southern end of Tsomoriri Lake). From here Leh is 141 miles. It has to cross four passes with heights ranging from 16,300 to 18,300 feet.

Another route links Chamba by way of Bhadarwah with Kishtwar which is 92½ miles long. From Kishtwar *via* Kargil, Leh is 306 miles. At Kargil it joins the road from Srinagar to Leh. From Kishtwar *via* Zanskar, Leh is 298 miles away. It has to cross seven passes with heights ranging from 12,500 to 17,370 feet; these remain open for a few months only because of heavy snow.

From Kishtwar *via* Islamabad, Srinagar is 102 miles but one has to cross the 11570 ft. high Marbal pass. Between Mughal Maidan and Kishtwar, a distance of seven miles, one has to cross the Wara and Chenab rivers. The route remains closed during winter. Jammu is 130 miles from Kishtwar but one has to cross the 10,000 ft. high Scogi pass. It remains closed for three months during winter.

All these routes are 'kacha' tracks which can be covered only on foot or horse-back. They have to pass through huge mountains and uninhabited areas. That is why they are in use only for small traffic on the borders.

8. **Sino-Kashmir routes**

From the northern areas, especially Leh, many a routes lead to Yarkand in Chinese Turkistan. One of them is 515 miles long, another one 610 miles and a third one 628 miles. Two of them meet at a place called "Bulak-i-Murghai" which is 135 miles from Leh *via* Sar-i-Man-i-Khawaja. Another route leads to a place known as Khushkmaidan. It branches off at Leh but both meet at a place called Brutse. All of them have to traverse 13 passes on the Karakoram whose heights range between 16,300 to 18,380 feet. The one from Leh *via* Sultan Chushmuk is said to remain open even in winter.

Another route, which has been recently reactivised, links Gilgit with Kashgar in Sinkiang. It is historically known as the Silk route but remained in disuse for a long time. Being built with Chinese assistance, it is to link Islamabad, the Pakistan capital with China at Khunjerab, the first settlement on the Pakistan-China border and 18000 feet high. Called the Friendship Highway, it is better known as the Pak-China Highway, the Chinese equivalent being the SUNG-PAK KUNGU.

The distance between Islamabad and Khunjerab is 650 miles. Gilgit is 450 miles by road from Islamabad. The road from Islamabad to Thakot, where it passes over Indus and covers a distance of 150 miles, has been already metalled by the Frontier Works Organisation. A distance of 80 miles beyond Gilgit has been metalled by the Chinese. Intended to be a double-carriage road and expected to be completed in a few years, it has great commercial but greater military importance.

Coming to internal routes connecting Kashmir valley with the northern regions, we have the Srinagar-Gilgit-Hunza road. It is 228 miles long. At thirteen places it passes through altitudes of above 5,000 feet; at eight places above 7,000 feet; at five places above 8000 feet and at some places even above 9000 feet. It remains closed for six months from the middle of November to the

middle of May. Between Tragbal and Zotkuse one has to cross the famous Raj Diangan Pass which is 11,800 feet high and between Gurikot in Gurez and Mohandas the 13,160 ft. high Umri pass. Another pass to be crossed is the 10,000 ft. high Mathupir between Duian and Ramghat. It was constructed by the same contractor Spedding who built the Jhelum-Valley Road. The sole purpose of its construction was to facilitate the passage of army personnel and their supplies. At Gurez, instead of crossing the Rajdiangan pass, one can make a diversion upto Astore by going to Bangla which is 8725 feet above sea-level and then *via* Burzil catch up the main road at Astore. On reaching Burzil, one has to cross the 13,500 ft. high Darikun pass. It closes later but opens earlier, making a difference of one month. It can also be crossed during winter except when the snow is falling. From Srinagar to Askardu *via* Deorai is 158 miles. Upto Burzil the road is the same as for Gilgit but from here 68 miles are in a different direction. One has to cross high passes such as Stakpila (12,900 feet) and Sarsingar (13,860 feet) while 20 to 22 miles behind Askardu one has to cross the 15,700 ft. high Burji pass. It remains closed for six months between October and March. From Srinagar to Askardu *via* Dras is 242 miles. For 115 miles it is the same as the one that leads to Leh. It passes through Gandarbal, Kangan, Sonamarg and eventually the 9,390 ft. high Tashgam. Kargil is 24 miles away *via* Chanchgund which is 8,675 feet high.

From Srinagar to Leh is 243 miles. From Tashgam, Askardu is 127 miles in one direction and Leh through Kargil is 144 miles ahead in another direction. Between Baltal and Matayan, about 74 miles, one has also to cross the 11,300 ft. high Zojila pass. Between Shargol and Kharbu, which is about 145 miles from Srinagar, one has to cross the 13,000 ft. high Namika pass between Kharbu and Lamayuru; about 170 miles from Srinagar, Indus is crossed by a bridge. The road remains closed during winter. There is another branch route *via* Tarutse but the distance is the same. The route to Tibet passes through Rudok (13,300 feet) which is the frontier post of Tibet and the (15,000 feet) high Mariamla, the highest pass between Leh and Lhasa.[1]

Coming to the internal routes linking the provinces of Kashmir and Jammu, apart from the Banihal, those that are important are: From Jammu *via* Akhnoor-Budul to Shopian and Srinagar is 129 miles. It is more like a dusty foot path. One of the halting stations is known as Delhi—11 miles from Budul which remains open for seven months only. Even ponies cannot be used on this track. Another one is from Jammu to Rajouri *via* Akhnoor and thence to Kashmir. Rajouri is 77

1 Drew.

miles from Jammu. An important station on this route is Dharamsala which is 33½ miles from Rajouri and 36 miles from Akhnoor. Poonch is 44 miles from Rajouri through Thana and Suran. One has to cross the Rattan range which, in this area, is not less than 8,000 feet. From Poonch *via* Haji Pir, the road leads to Srinagar *via* Uri and Baramula. It is 209 miles between Jammu and Srinagar. Since 1948, so many roads, some metalled, have sprung up on both sides of the Cease-fire line, obviously for strategic reasons, that even the remotest and the most inaccessible points, can now be reached at least by jeep. Engineering sections of the two Armies have done an admirable job.

EXPORTS, HANDICRAFTS AND REVENUE

In 1904-5,[1] the total value of trade with Tibet, China and Central Asia was 61.2 lacs. During the ten years ending 1901, the average value was rupees 44.3 lacs, the maximum having been achieved in 1895-96 which was 62.2 lacs and the minimum 30.8 lacs in 1891-92. The imports from Central Asia into Ladakh amounted to 17.8 lacs. Of this, about 14 lacs came from Chinese Turkistan and the balance from Tibet. Goods of the value of 11.3 lacs found their way to Punjab *via* Kashmir; others going *via* Kulu. The chief articles were raw silk (5.9 lacs); Russian gold coins (4.3 lacs); raw wool (3 lacs) and Charas (2.2 lacs). The exports from Ladakh through Central Asia amounted to 11.4 lacs. Of this, goods of the value of ten lacs went to Chinese Turkistan and the remaining to Tibet. The more important items of export were: European cotton piece goods (3.4 lacs); coral (1.2 lacs); silk goods European (1.8 lacs); Indian (54000). The value of trade passing from India to Ladakh was 14.3 lacs.

The total value of exports in 1904—1905 was Rs. 192 lacs. The more important items were the following:

		Rs.
Drugs	..	5,78,425
Dyes	..	48,023
Fruit	..	7,48,883
Hydes	..	7,98,160
Skins	..	5,63,065
Clarified Butter	..	30,02,974
Linse	..	73,952
Shawls	..	8,000
Piece-goods	..	10,75,047
Silk	..	21,00,000

1 Imperial Gazetteer of India, 1909 Jammu & Kashmir.

Among the important imports were piece-goods (both European and Indian) valued at Rs. 23,79,041; metals valued at Rs. 2,19,455; salt valued at Rs. 9,32,601; sugar valued at Rs. 11,72,436; tea valued at Rs. 5,26,468; tobacco valued at Rs. 3,91,960 and petroleum valued at Rs. 8,94,164.[1] The principal exports to and through Pakistan in the year 1946 amounted to: timber 100%, fruit 100% and woollens 95%. In the budget for the year 1946-47, the income from forests was one crore 95 lacs and more than 14/15th of it came from the sale of timber exported to Pakistan through Jhelum and Chenab.

In 1905-1906, the total revenue collected was Rs. 93 lacs only with the following main items:

Land revenue	..	38.9 Lacs
Forests	..	13.0 Lacs
Customs and Octroi	..	9.2 Lacs

In 1937 the income was 2 crore 47 lac rupees of which nearly one-fourth was derived from customs. By 1946-47, the revenue had increased to five crore eighty lac rupees with the following main heads:

Forests	1 crore 95 lacs
Customs	1 crore 60 Lacs
Income-Tax	1 crore 40 lacs
Miscellaneous	85 Lacs

Before partition the State could boast of no industry as understood in the modern sense despite its infinite natural resources. Apart from the setting up of a gigantic steel plant which could revolutionise the economic out-look of the State, multi-purpose timber industry, fruit processing plants, tanneries and woollen mills could be easily established because of the local availability in abundance of the requisite raw material. A chain of match factories could also be set up because of the availability of poplars; similarly numerous industries with resin as principal raw material could also be fruitfully established; the manufacture of shawls, pattu, carpets, silk and other handicrafts could be extended on a large scale and all this could have not only provided employment to a large number of people but also brought in large revenues for the State. Unfortunately, the Dogras, as already illustrated above, were against industrialisation of the State because of their fear that the growth of economic prosperity would result in further political awakening. The only factories existing before 1947 were the Silk factory at Srinagar, the

1 Imperial Gazetteer of India 1909.

Match factory at Baramula, a small-scale saw-mill at Baramula which manufactured rifle butts, a small factory which processed KUTH and certain plants which produced wine and were exclusively owned by the Dogra rulers.

The manufacture of shawls, carpets, namdas, wood carving, papier-mache, pattu and other handicrafts did take place and were not only a source of great attraction for the tourists but were also exported in large quantity and sold as far away as Calcutta, Bombay, Simla, Lahore, Murree and Rawalpindi but the Government provided neither assistance nor encouragement. These handicrafts were produced in the Valley alone where the art, especially since the days of the Mughal rule, had thrived and descended from family to family.

Kashmiri shawl was known in Europe centuries ago. Kashmiris hold that in the greatest painting of all times, 'Mona Liza', the garment worn by the woman is a Kashmiri shawl. The demand for Kashmiri shawls in Europe increased manifold after its introduction to European nobility by Josephine. It happened like this: In 1776 A.D., during the reign of Afghan Governor Abdullah Khan, a blind divine Sayed Yahya of Baghdad paid a visit to Srinagar. On his return, the Governor presented him a fine specimen of a Kashmiri shawl. The Sayed later visited Egypt where he presented it to the Khedive. Sometime later when Napoleon visited Alexandria, the Khedive made a gift of the shawl to him. On his return to Paris, when it had the honour of being worn by Josephine, it became an immediate fashion hit.[1] It may be pointed out that it is made of the finest quality of wool and the finest of shawls can be conveniently passed through a signet ring and is Known as ring-shawl.

THE VALLEY

The State has many valleys such as the Kishanganga valley, the Gurez valley, the Astore valley but the most famous of them all, which is also easy of access and frequented by tourists from all over the world, is the Valley of Kashmir. It is the biggest valley of its kind anywhere in the world and has been described by the Imperial Gazetteer of India 1909 as "an emerald set in pearls". It has also been called the "Jewel of Asia". French traveller Bernier called it "The terrestrial Paradise of the Indies". It is in the latitude of 34.5 degrees north and longitude of 74.48 degrees east. It is of an oval shape, 116 miles in length and 40 to 75 miles in width. Its heart-land, which is comparatively low and flat, is 84 miles long and 20 to 25 miles in width. The flat land varies from five thousand to seven thousand feet above sea-level, the

1 Bamzai p. 582.

lowest portion being on the north-western side. Similarly the width is lesser in the southern area and as one progresses towards the north, it becomes greater, being widest after crossing Srinagar.

It is surrounded by mountains; to the north-west, these are eighteen thousand feet high; to the north-east where these curve round the Valley, they have an average height of twelve thousand to thirteen thousand feet. On the south-western side are the Pir Panjal hills which extend for a length of some eighty miles. While on the south-eastern side the ridge is lower, on the south-western side it is lowest with a height of ten thousand feet. The Valley is almost enclosed by them except for the opening at Baramula where the drainage of the Valley escapes to the sea. Laulab Valley is a part of the Kashmir Valley. It is 6 × 8 miles in area and is situated on its north-western end.

Among the important towns are Veri-Nag whence river Jhelum draws its source; it is six thousand feet high, Islamabad, the headquarter of the district of Islamabad which is 5600 feet high, Avanti-pura, five thousand three hundred and fifty feet high, Srinagar, the State Capital, five thousand two hundred thirty five feet high, Shopian, the town of entry on the Mughal route, six thousand seven hundred and fifteen feet high, Bandipura, the last town on the southern side of Wular lake, is five thousand three hundred feet high, Sopore, five thousand one hundred eighty feet high and Baramula, the last town in the Valley, five thousand one hundred feet high. Fifteen miles from Srinagar towards south on the main road to Jammu, lies Pampur, the only place in the sub-continent where Saffron (Crocus sativus) is grown. The fields extend from eight to ten miles.

Among the more important hill-resorts are Gulmarg, Tangmarg, Pahalgam, Khilanmarg, Kokarnag, Achhabal, Gandarbal and Sonamarg. They are situate at a height of more than seven thousand feet. The best known among them is Gulmarg which is above eight thousand feet, has all modern amenities available and presents in summer, the spectacle of a great carnival. It is not very far from the Cease-fire line. Gandarbal is on the south of Sind Valley and is watered by Sind. It is at a distance of ten miles from Srinagar and can also be reached by boat. About forty miles farther away, is one of the finest forests in the world, spread over a length of fifteen miles and comprising Pinus Excelsa, Silver fir, Spruce and deodar, at a height of six thousand feet. Sonamarg is 8,600 feet high and the last inhabited place in the Sind valley.

Askardu valley is twenty miles in length while the width varies from one to five miles; immediately below it, Shigar river joins Indus and the

latter becomes so fast that it has a velocity of six miles an hour. Shigar valley is 24 × 3 miles. It is eight thousand feet high.

The origin of the word "Kashmir" is anybody's guess. The Rajatarangni claim that it was derived from a historically fictitious Rishi, Keyshup who allegedly drained the submerged valley by creating a huge passage near Baramula, is a myth, for such a feat was humanly impossible. Two Chinese travellers To Yeng and Sung Yun, who visited the Valley in 578 A.D., have in their narratives described it as Shiemi while their successor and the better known Hsuan Tsang, who spent two years here (631-633) and also attended probably the last Budhist international conference of the age which was held in Kashmir, has described it as Kia-chi-mi-lo. A person who spent two years here cannot be said not to have been acquainted with the name thoroughly or to have mis-spelt it. Anyway, whoever has once visited it, has almost entirely become hers; they included Emperors like Jehangir who said:—

اگر فردوس بر روئے زمین است
همیں است و همیں است و همیں است

Trans : If paradise exists on the planet Earth,
it is here, it is here, it is here.

and sages like Iqbal who said:—

کوه و دریا و غروب آفتاب
من خدارا دیدم آن جا بے حجاب

Trans : Its mountains, rivers and the sunset;
unveiled the true self of God.

Says an English-man who spent almost 35 years in Srinagar:—

> "Three months of this life, notwithstanding the exposure, affects a wonderful improvement in the health of anyone who has been thoroughly done up by several years of service on the plains of India. I have seen a man walking regularly his thirty miles a day over difficult ground who, on starting two months before, had to ride or get carried two-thirds of every march. The remarkable thing is that even a person of delicate health does not suffer from the exposure."[1]

1 Biddulphs p. 35.

Sir Walter Lawrence, the Settlement Commissioner, wrote:

"The Valley contains everything which should make life enjoyable. There is sport, varied and excellent; there is scenery for the artist and the layman; mountains for the mountaineer; flowers for the botanist; a vast field for the geologist and magnificent ruins for the archaeologist. The epicure will find dainty fruits and vegetables cheaper here than perhaps in any other part of the world, while the lounger can pass delightful days of the dolce fayniente in the neat house-boats moored under its shady Chinars."[1]

Baron Charles Hugel visiting Kashmir in the time of Sikhs, was shocked by the miserable plight of its inhabitants and turning to Nature for solace, exclaimed:—

"Such were my impressions of the long-dreams of fairy land; thence, as I gradually turned my disappointed gaze from the works of man to the glorious mountain scenery above, with their thousand peaks of snowy whiteness, their graceful outlines, the harmony and sweet repose which seemed to characterise the calm, motionless valley; the contrast between simple majestic Nature and enterprising ambitious Man, filled my heart with emotions which imprinted the beauties of the first on my memory and made human works lose every shade of significance."[2]

Describing a typical scene, E.F. Knight has recorded:—

"This was a morning not easily to be forgotten, cloudless, fresh as it might have been in Paradise in the youth of the world; and this is the sort of picture that naturally suggests itself to one travelling in this wonderful valley. Shortly after dawn, when the dew was still on the pastures and a thin haze was in the air, a very curious and a fairy-like scene lay before us. The whole plain was here over-grown with the small blue iris in full flowers, presenting the appearance in the distance of a great still blue sea. Of exactly the same tint was the sky above us and the lower portion of the mountain range on the far horizon where the snow was not lying. Thus plain and sky and hills were not distinguishable one from another. One seemed to be looking into an infinite pale blue space, cloven in the centre by a jagged band of pearly white—the distant snowy uplands trembling in mirage. But one must have seen it to realise the unreal beauty of the picture."[3]

1 Pithawalla p. 4.
2 Hugel p. 106.
3 E.F. Knight p. 57 & 85.

"No more beauty spots can be found for openair revelry than the fair gardens that surround the capital of Kashmir, where sloping lawns, beautiful groves, pavelions combine to form ideal places for the purpose; indeed the genius of picnic seems to rule the whole shores of the Dal; the desire for careless pleasure, feasting and flirting is inspired by the cool breeze that blows over the broad lake through these pleasant groves and gardens; and this is not to be wondered at because were they not planted by those grand old picnickers, the Emperor Akbar, Jehangir and Aurangzeb? Often did the fair Noor Mahal and other ancient Queens of beauty picnic in these sweet retreats. I should not be surprised, by the way, if the very word picnic, whose origin, I believe, is unknown, were some old Kashmir name for the pleasant past time of which this happy Valley was the birth-place."[1]

Tourism was the principal industry of the Valley before partition; ninety percent being Europeans and particularly Englishmen and their families. It may be emphasised that tourism as a phenomenon and as the earner of staggering amounts of foreign exchange, was unknown before the second world War. The rush, rather the stampede, started only after the War because of diverse political, economic and social reasons. According to official figures, twenty four thousand seven hundred eighteen persons visited Kashmir valley as tourists in 1936-37. Because of the difficulties of communications since Indian occupation and the lengthening of distances plus the uncertainty that hangs over the future of the State, the tourist trade has greatly suffered and, but for these reasons, it would have by now positively crossed the seventh figure mark and brought an economic boon.

LAKES

The State also abounds in lakes. A brief description of the more important is given below:

Woolar Lake

Situate about eight miles from Sangrama on the Jhelum Valley Road, it is the largest fresh-water lake in the subcontinent; it is extremely deep. Sangrama is twenty seven miles from Srinagar towards Baramula. During summer, the lake assumes a width of fourteen miles while in winter it comes down to seven miles. It is twelve and a half mile long. Jhelum enters the lake from the north and resumes its flow downwards towards Sopore from its southern end. There is abundance

1 E. F. Knight, p. 57 & 85.

of fish and duck shikar. The lake also produces hundreds of maunds of Singhara (Trapa bispinosa). According to Moorcroft, it yielded annually at least an average return of 96 to 120 thousand ass-loads of Singharas, also known as water-nuts. A foreign traveller who visited Kashmir in 1877, wrote about the lake:—

> "When I looked at this picture, I almost believed the tradition that this was the original garden of Eden."[1]

Exclaimed another keen globe-trotter:

> "I never saw such lovely scenery as delights the eye while sailing lazily along this part of the beautiful Vale of Kashmir. The poet may well say of it as he said of Greece: "Where all save the spirit of man is divine."."[2]

Dal Lake

It is a sweet water lake at the foot of Takht-i-Sulaiman hill. It is five miles long from north to south and two miles wide from east to west. Towards the end of the city, its water enters Jhelum and is controlled by a lock called the "Dal Lock". A net-work of canals and water-ways intersect the lake at some points. Lotus grows in great abundance especially at Nagin and Naseem gardens. It is in part shallow and inclining to be marshy. At places it is deeper but everywhere the water is crystal clear and pure. On three sides, it is surrounded by an amphitheatre of mountains which have summits of three to four thousand feet from the water level which means eight to nine thousand feet above sea-level. A metalled road runs round it linking various beauty spots. At the foot of the mountains are numerous villages with front gardens. On the western side are the famous floating gardens. These are artificial and grow vegetables of different kinds which are very delicious and in great demand. They can be easily moved from one place to another in the lake. The three most delightful places on the lake, Shalimar, Naseem and Nishat gardens were laid by the Mughals who frequented Kashmir during the oppressive heat in the plains. Sir Walter Lawrence says of the lake:—

> "The Dal Lake, measuring about four miles by 2½ miles, lies close to Srinagar and is perhaps one of the most beautiful spots in the world.

1 Cowley Lambert p. 27.
2 Mrs. Hervey p. 97.

The mountain ridges, which are reflected in its waters as in a mirror, are grand and varied, the trees and vegetation on the shores of Dal being of exquisite beauty. It is difficult to say when the Dal is most beautiful. In the spring the fresh green tints of the trees and the mountain sides are refreshing to the eye but it is perhaps in October that the colours of the lake are most charming. The willows change from green to silver grey and delicate with a red tone on the stems and branches, casting colours on the clear waters of the lake which contrast most beautifully with the rich olives and yellow greens of the floating masses of the water weed. The chinars are warm with crimson and the poplars stand up like golden poles to the sky. On the mountain sides the trees are red and gold and the scene is one of unequalled loveliness. Perhaps in the whole world there is no corner so pleasant as the Dal Lake."[1]

Mansbal Lake

It is in Sind Valley, about 18 miles from Srinagar. It has been described by English naturalists as "the loveliest lake in the world". "The Lotus" says Arthur Neve "is no-where more abundant or beautiful than on the marshes of this lake". Jehangir built the Darogha Bagh here but no trace of it remains now. It is forty-seven feet deep.

Wakefield has described a visit to the Lake in the following words:—

"The scene was one of such great and exceeding loveliness that words are but poor means for conveying any real idea of the glories of this apparently enchanted region, as it appeared that evening. It was the hour of sunset; the sky showed bright and clear, save where a few fleecy clouds were drifting slowly towards the west, tinged with the reddish orange-colour reflected by the rays of the now rapidly disappearing orb of day, which, although half-hidden by the lofty mountains of the western range, still afforded in its expiring glory sufficient dazzling light to throw the most exquisite tints and shades upon and around the surrounding scenery. The lake upon which we were floating lay spread out before us—an oval silvery sheet of crystal, reflecting on its untroubled surface a perfect picture of the works of nature by which it was encircled."[2]

Anchar Lake

It is six miles from Srinagar. One can also reach it by boat from Dal

1 Walter Lawrence p. 21.
2 Wakefield.

lake through a canal called "Mar canal", built by Zain-ul-Abedin. There is abundance of Lotus and Chestnut trees.

Sheesh Nag Lake

It is at a height of eleven thousand seven hundred thirty feet on way to Amarnath. It is a snow-fed lake.

Kausar-Nag Lake

Situated at a height of about fifteen thousand feet on the Pir Panjal range, it is the highest lake in the State. About thirty miles from Shopian, it is about two miles long. During summer glaciers float over it like ferries.

Among the lakes in the northern regions, there are three in the Salt lake Valley in Rupshu. The fresh water lake is called "Panbuk". It is one mile square. One Salt lake is 13×5 miles and another one known as "Tso-Kar" is seven square miles. At places it is thirty feet deep. Its water is bitter and tasteless.

In Ladakh, among other lakes, the most important is the Pang-Kong lake which is forty miles long but quite narrow in width. It is to be found beyond the village of Chushal. Its water is saltish.

Sunsar Lake

"Sar" means lake. This lake is situated at a height of twelve thousand seven hundred feet. It is three-fourths by one-half of a mile on the Rattan range near Drahl valley in Rajouri. It remains frozen even in the middle of June when it begins to melt.

A few miles away is the Nil Sar lake which is a larger one. Towards Kashmir on this road is another lake known as "Nandan Sar" lake. There are other small lakes too in this range.

Ratigali Lake

The largest among the lakes situated in Azad Kashmir, it is formed by the waters of large natural tanks and the nearby snowy peaks. About a mile long and a thousand feet wide, the size remains almost stationary throughout the year. Situated at a height of about seven thousand feet, it lies on the left side of the Muzaffarabad-Sharda Road, 80 miles from Muzaffarabad *via* Dawarian. From Dawarian which is 66 miles from

Muzaffarabad, there is no vehicular road and one has to cover 14 miles on foot or horse-back. Part of the journey, particularly the last two miles, involve difficult climb. The water is reported to be clean.

Two comparatively smaller, but otherwise quite sizable, lakes are situate again on the left side of the same road at Putlian, thirteen miles from Lawat and at Kala Jandar, eighteen miles from Sharda in the Surgan nullah. Again, the distance from Lawat and Sharda has to be covered on foot or horse-back. Their inaccessibility seems to be the reason why despite presenting beautiful sights, they have remained obscure.

GARDENS

The Valley is famous for its beautiful gardens. Some foreign writers have compared Srinagar with Versailles whose world-famous gardens were so laboriously laid by Louis XIV.

According to Pandit Anand Kaul, "the Mughals had laid as many as 700 gardens around Dal Lake alone". Mughal emperors and their Court ladies were devoted gardeners themselves. It was their hobby. They also laid gardens on the banks of Mansbal lake, Anchar lake, Achhabal, Veri-nag and Aliabad in Mendhar, Poonch, where a big waterfall is still remembered as "Noor-i-Chham", meaning, Noor Jehan's waterfall. According to Lawrence, the output of roses and willows which were used for extraction of perfume, a discovery attributed to Noor Jehan, from gardens around Dal lake during Mughal rule, fetched an income of rupees one lac which in the present-day money-market is equal to at least fifty lac rupees.

The most important among these still in existence are the Shalimar, the Naseem, the Nishat, the Nagin, Char Chinar and Chashma Shahi in Srinagar and those of Achhabal and Verinag outside the city. Given below is a brief description of these world-famous gardens:

Shalimar Bagh

Undoubtedly the finest in the sub-continent is the Shalimar garden built by Jehangir in 1619 A.D. It is connected with Dal lake by a canal which is about a mile long and 12 yards in width. Both sides have green paths over-shadowed by trees. The garden is 590 yards long and over 200 yards wide. Divided into four terraces of equal dimensions, each terrace rises like a stair. There is a line of tanks stretching throughout the length of the garden and running in its midst. They are connected

by a canal 18 inches deep and 9 to 14 feet wide. The tanks, the streams, the fountains and cascades are lined with polished lime-stone resembling black marble. The water has been brought from the Harwan stream and flows down each terrace in beautiful stone chutes, carved in many an ingenius pattern of shell and fish—a most enjoyable sight. The fourth terrace, meant for ladies, contains a magnificent black-stone pavilion described by some foreigner as "a romance in stone" which is raised on a platform three feet high and 65 feet square. Its sloping roof is about 20 feet high and is supported by 24 elaborately carved marble pillars. It was used as a banquet hall. The pavilion is surrounded by a reservoir, 52 yards square and 3½ feet deep. It is lined with fine stone and contains 140 large fountains.

Upon each side of the terrace, built against the wall, there is also residential accommodation for the royal family. In the other three terraces there are small pavilions and the one in the last terrace has 16 black-stone pillars. Wrote Percy Brown, the daughter of Lt. Col. Sir Adelbert Cecil Talbot, British Resident 1896-1900 :[1]

"To cast their spell on all who gaze
Upon this handi-work of love—
Reared in Jehangir's proudest days
Homage for Noor Mahal to prove."

Once, while in the garden, Jehangir in a pleasant romantic mood, deliberately fanned a "quarrel" with Noor Jehan so as to enjoy her anger and then like a traditional helpless lover, soothed her emotions by making a flat surrender. The scene is aptly described below by the celebrated Irish dramatist, Thomas Moore in his equally celebrated Eastern romance, Lalla Rookh (لالہ رخ) first published in England in 1817 and enacted not only in Britain and France but also in Berlin where it was staged for the first time on 27th January 1822:[2]

"And well do vanished frowns enhance
The charms of every brightened glance
And dearer seems each dawning smile
For having lost its light a while
And happier now for all her sighs
And on his arm her head reposes;
She whispers him with laughing smile,
"Remember love, the feast of Roses"."

1 Encyclopaedia Britannica V. 15 p. 818 (1968 ed.)
2 Florence Parbury.



The Mughal Garden
at Achhabal



Chashma
Shahi Garden.

The famous
spring is
under the
Pavilion

Nishat Bagh

It was laid by Asif Khan, brother of Noor Jehan. Situated two miles to the south of Dal lake, it is 595 yards long and 369 yards wide. It is divided into ten terraces, three of which are higher than others, being 16 to 18 feet higher even among themselves. There is, like the Shalimar, a line of tanks along the centre of the whole garden. They are connected by a canal about 13 feet wide and 8 inches deep and lined with polished stones.

There are two main pavilions at both ends of the garden. The lower one is double-storeyed and is built of wood and plaster upon a foundation of stones. Its lower floor is 59 feet long and 48 feet wide. In the middle is a reservoir 14 feet square and three feet deep which contains many a fountain. The upper storey has lofty corridors on its eastern and western sides. On the northern side is an apartment 25 feet long and 14½ feet wide which is enclosed by lattice work. There is a similar apartment on the southern side. An opening in the middle of the floor, about 27 feet square, commands a magnificent view not only of the garden itself but also of the lake and the surrounding mountains. Giant-size chinars and cypresses stand on walking paths and else-where to make it really a place of bliss.

Nasim Bagh

It lies across the Dal lake on its western shore. It was laid by Shah Jehan. Originally as many as 1200 chinar saplings were planted and it is said that these were fed by a mixture of milk and water.

Among the other Mughal gardens, that have survived the ravages of time and the pillageous Sikh rule, are the Char Chinar garden in Srinagar, Chashma Shahi garden on the slope of the Zebwan Hill near Srinagar, Achhabal or the Begumabad garden about 40 miles to the south of Srinagar and the garden at Verinag, the source of river Jhelum. The Char Chinar was laid by Prince Murad in 1641. The trees have been so planted that whichever the direction of the Sun, one can always have the refreshing cool shade of the chinar available for rest and escape from heat.

Achhabal Garden

The Achhabal garden also called "Begumabad" after Jehan Ara Begum, the daughter of Shah Jehan, who laid it in 1620, is 467 feet long and 450 feet in width. It is divided into two portions. The spot seems to have

attracted the princess particularly because of its spring which is one of the finest anywhere in the world. The place is densely covered by stately 'deodars'. The water springs flow from many places, one of them so large as to admit a man's body. It has been diverted into three beautiful streams, the central one 16 feet wide and those on its sides, 6½ feet wide. The central stream is connected with two large tanks, the first one is 188 feet long and 74 feet broad and contains in the centre a wooden pavilion about 18 feet square which rests on a platform of stone masonry; the lower tank is about 80 feet square. The upper part of the garden has three artificial water-falls, the largest is the central one which has a fall of 12 feet and a width of eight feet. Outside the lower end of the garden, are also three water-falls formed by these streams as a fine farewell to the garden, the largest is the middle one which is 8 feet high and 6 feet wide. This is the description of the garden as it exists at present. What it was during the reign of Aurangzeb, is described below by the French traveller, Bernier:

> "Its (Achhabal) principal beauty is a fountain of which the water disperses itself on all sides around a building which is not devoid of elegance and flows through the garden by a hundred canals. It comes out of earth as if mounted and returned from the bottom of a well with violence and boiling and in such abundance that it may rather be called a river than a fountain. Its water is admirably good and is so cold that to hold the hand within it (even during hot summer) could scarcely be borne. The garden is very beautiful on account of its alleys, the great quantity of fruit trees, apricots and cherries, the quantity of Jets dieau of all kind of cascade which in falling makes a great sheet of 30 to 40 paces in length, the effect of which is admirable, particularly at night when they have placed below it an infinity of little lamps which are arranged in holes made on purposes in the wall, all of which is of very great beauty."

It is about the Achhabal spring that the great persian poet Urfi has said :

آن چشمه که رضوان چورود تشنه بسویش
کوثر بسر و تیز تر و تشنه تر آید

Trans : A Spring to which not only the Paradise rushes with thirst,
Even Kausar runs towards it headlong and thirsty.

The garden suffered from neglect during the Afghan rule and was nearly pillaged by the Sikhs. Ranbir Singh, struck by its beauty, took steps to save it from complete destruction but he could naturally not

restore it to its pristine grandeur. Pearce Gervis who appears to have read Bernier's description before visiting Achhabal, has so aptly commented:

"No Hindu or Sikh can be expected to improve a Mughal garden or summer house; they may like flowers in their ladies' hair, they may like them in vases or in pots on the steps or round the verandahs but they were never great at gardening."[1]

Wrote Percy Brown :

"It is indeed a pleasure sweet,
To linger in this old retreat—
Or where could one more fondly muse,
Had we the whole wide world to choose."[2]

There is also a hot spring, which was in good preservation even as late as 1863 when Captain Knight visited it, and which, he reverently states:

"had probably in its day been honoured by the fair presence of Noor Jehan."[3]

......AND........THE PEOPLE

According to the census report of 1941, the State had 8903 villages, 39 towns and two cities. The total number of villages in Jammu province was 4,472 and in Kashmir province, including Muzaffarabad, 3,476. In the frontier districts, the total number of villages was 728. The total urban population was 3,62,314 while the total rural population was 35,03,929. The average density of population per square mile was 56 except in the frontier districts where it was hardly five per square mile. It is approximately 217 per sq. mile in Kashmir Valley and 161 per sq. mile in Jammu province. According to the census report of 1961, the density of population in Azad Kashmir is 259 per sq. mile, the total population being 10,64,835 excluding the Northern areas which are directly administered by the Pakistan Government.

The first estimate of the number of inhabitants was made in 1873 but the first regular census was taken in 1891 when the population was counted at 25,43,992. By the census of 1901, it had increased by 14%

1 This is Kashmir p. 121.
2 Chenar Leaves.
3 Diary of a Pedestra, p. 108.

and was numbered at 29,05,578. So much increase was partly due to improved methods of enumeration. For instance, in 1891 the recorded population of Gilgit was only 16,769 whereas in 1901 it rose to 60,885. It meant an increase of 22% in Kashmir province as against an increase of only 6% in Jammu province. The over-all density of population then was 36 persons per sq. mile. The density of population per square mile of land under cultivation was 64 in Muzaffarabad but 1295 in Gilgit because the culturable land available there is very limited.

The total population of the State in 1911 was 31,61,324 out of which Muslims were 23,99,228 and the Hindus excluding Sikhs and Budhists, 6,91,722. The Sikhs numbered 31,550. According to the census report of 1921, the total population was 33,20,518; the Muslims were 26,08,565; Hindus, 6,92,869 and Sikhs, 38,975. According to the 1931 census, the total population was 36,35,625; the Muslims numbered 28,08,436, the Hindus 7,35,781 and the Sikhs 50,279. According to the 1941 census, the total population was 40,23,180; the Muslims numbered 31,02,700 and non-Muslims 9,20,480. The population of Jammu province was 19,81,433; Muslims numbering 12,15,676, Hindus including Sikhs were 7,65,757. Even excluding Poonch district, the Muslims were in an over-all majority in Jammu province by a margin of 1,06,620. These figures are very important because Indian publicists have always given a false version of population figures in this province and presented it as a Hindu majority area. Even such writers as Josef Corbel and Lord Birdwood have been misled by the Indian claim.

Given ahead is a tehsil-wise detailed chart of the State's population according to the 1941 census:

Name of district	Total population	Name of tehsil	Total population	Muslims district-wise	Non-Muslims district-wise
1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Jammu	4,31,362	Jammu	1,52,556	1,70,789	2,48,173
		Samba	39,464		
		Sri Ranbirsinghpura	96,521		
		Akhnoor	82,821		
2. Kathua	1,77,672	Kathua	47,378	45,000	1,32,890
		Jashmergarh	59,670		
		Basohli	70,624		
3. Udhampur	2,94,217	Udhampur	52,937	1,28,327	1,65,890
		Kishtwar	60,893		
		Ramban	75,793		
		Ramnagar	60.076		
		Bhadarwah	44,513		

1	2	3	4	5	6
4. Reasi	2,97,903	Reasi Rampur-Rajouri	1,17,059 1,40,344	1,75,539	82,364
5. Mirpur	3,86,655	Kotli Mirpur Bhimber	1,11,037 1,13,115 1,62,503	3,10,000	75,753
6. Chenani	11,796			2,205	9,591
7. Poonch	4,21,825	Bagh Sudhnuti Haveli Mendhar	1,01,091 1,08,300 1,10,732 1,01,704	3,80,313	41,515
8. Baramula	6,12,428	Uttarmachipura (Handwara) Baramula Sri Pratapsinghpura	2,74,942 1,62,903 1,74,583	5,20,936	21,492
9. Islamabad	8,51,606	Khas Pulwama Kulgam Islamabad	3,33,881 2,56,526 1,57,372 2,03,827	7,78,675	72,931
10. Muzaffarabad	2,64,671	Muzaffarabad Uri Karnah	1,25,585 80,223 58,963	2,45,858	18,813
11. Ladakh	1,95,431	Ladakh Kargil Skardu	36,307 52,853 1,06,271	1,54,492	40,790
12. Astore	17,020		..	16,878	143
13. Gilgit leased area	22,495		..	22,296	199
14. Gilgit Agency	76,526		..	76,427	99

A glance on the chart will show that in the Jammu province the districts of Jammu, Udhampur and Kathua only had a non-Muslim majority. In the Jammu district, Muslims numbered 1,70,789 whereas non-Muslims were 2,48,173 and similarly in the district of Kathua while Muslims numbered over 45,000, the non-Muslims were 1,32,408. The total area of the two districts is 2,170 sq. miles only. In the Udhampur district which consisted of five tehsils, the tehsils of Bhadarwah and Kishtwar are Muslim-majority tehsils and adjoin Kashmir valley. In 1948 they were grouped together in a new administrative unit by the Government of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah and named Dodah district. The mother-tongue of its Muslim Inhabitants is Kashmiri.

According to the Indian census of 1961, out of a total population of 2,68,403 in the district, Muslims numbered 1,74,749 i.e., about 65%.

Even the district of Ladakh is a Muslim majority district; the Muslims numbered 1,54,492 whereas the non Muslims who are 99% Budhists and have nothing in common with Hindus, numbered 40,790. It is only in the tehsil of Ladakh that the Budhists are in a majority.

Given ahead are census charts for the years 1911, 1921 and 1931:

1911 CENSUS

Place	Muslims	Hindus	Sikhs	Budhists	Christians	Others	Total
Jammu city	10,774	19,908	709	—	166	471	32,028
Jammu cantt.	423	2,748	16	—	14	—	3,201
Distt. Jammu	1,15,989	1,75,695	2,461	—	299	521	2,94,965
Distt. Kathua	35,171	1,16,167	108	11	170	72	1,51,699
Distt. Udhampur	83,027	1,21,522	128	439	—	20	2,05,136
Distt. Chinani-Jagir	1,663	8,926	—	—	—	—	10,589
Distt. Bhadarwah	14,580	22,931	—	2	—	—	37,513
Distt. Reasi	1,25,324	80,996	481	—	1	11	2,06,813
Distt. Mirpur	2,64,342	57,187	3,156	—	10	237	3,24,932
Distt. Poonch	3,02,723	21,977	9,621	—	28	54	3,34,403
	9,54,016	6,28,057	16,680	452	688	1,386	16,01,279

KASHMIR VALLEY AND MUZAFFARABAD

Place	Muslims	Hindus	Sikhs	Budhists	Christians	Others	Total
Srinagar city	96,938	28,736	486	—	112	72	1,26,344
Distt. Islamabad	4,91,701	19,015	2,100	—	50	—	5,12,866
Distt. Baramula	4,46,225	9,917	4,575	2	39	23	4,60,781
Distt. Muzaffarabad	1,82,863	4,697	7,611	1	17	16	1,95,205
	12,17,727	62,365	14,772	3	218	111	12,95,196

FRONTIER DISTRICTS							
Distt. Ladakh	1,50,070	407	41	35,847	63	18	1,86,446
Distt. Gilgit	23,075	816	57	—	21	—	23,969
Pol. Agency Gilgit	54,340	77	—	17	—	—	54,434
	2,27,485	1,300	98	35,864	84	18	2,64,849
Grand Total	23,99,228	6,91,722	31,550	36,319	990	1,515	31,61,324
1921 CENSUS							
Jammu city	8,483	20,341	703	4	478	—	30,009
Jammu cantt.	518	974	5	—	—	—	1,497
Distt. Jammu	1,81,720	1,76,599	4,224	—	562	224	3,63,329
Distt. Kathua	36,303	1,17,503	257	—	146	—	1,54,209
Distt. Udhampur	83,881	1,22,995	225	438	2	—	2,07,541
Distt. Chinani-Jagir	1,373	9,240	7	—	—	—	10,620
Distt. Bhadarwah	15,040	22,564	9	—	1	—	37,614
Distt. Reasi	1,44,195	79,580	814	—	—	—	2,24,589
Distt. Mirpur	2,57,741	56,526	4,698	—	6	—	3,18,971
Distt. Poonch	3,20,368	20,816	10,585	—	12	—	3,51,781
	10,49,622	6,27,138	21,527	442	1,207	224	17,00,160
KASHMIR VALLEY AND MUZAFFARABAD							
Srinagar city	1,10,935	30,017	541	1	238	3	1,41,735
Distt. Islamabad	5,24,290	19,704	2,660	1	65	32	5,46,752
Distt. Baramula	4,86,680	10,372	5,332	—	33	73	5,02,490
Distt. Muzaffarabad	2,02,498	4,397	9,208	—	6	—	2,16,109
	13,24,403	64,490	17,741	2	342	108	14,07,086
FRONTIER DISTRICTS							
Distt. Ladakh	1,45,897	293	48	37,231	7	—	1,83,476
Distt. Gilgit	27,894	728	69	—	15	—	28,706
Pol. Agency Gilgit	60,749	220	21	—	1	—	60,991
	2,34,540	1,241	138	37,231	23	—	2,73,173
Grand Total	26,08,565	6,92,869	39,406	37,675	1,572	332	33,80,419

1931 CENSUS

Jammu city	12,036	24,665	1,296	9	602	5	38,613
Jammu Cantt.	1,347	2,806	21	—	7	—	4,181
Distt. Jammu	1,35,953	1,90,172	5,540	—	753	36	3,32,454
Distt. Kathua	39,647	1,20,938	478	—	169	—	1,61,232
Distt. Udhampur	1,17,051	1,55,765	318	492	32	—	2,73,658
Distt. Chinani Jagir	1,512	9,409	4	—	—	—	10,922
Distt. Bhadarwah	(Integrated into district Udhampur)						
Distt. Reasi	1,55,353	79,012	842	6	32	—	2,35,245
Distt. Mirpur	2,68,431	57,602	9,432	—	82	—	3,35,547
Distt. Poonch	3,50,491	25,473	11,344	—	76	—	3,87,384
	10,81,821	6,65,839	29,275	507	1,753	41	17,79,236

KASHMIR VALLEY AND MUZAFFARABAD

Srinagar city	1,38,768	32,653	890	8	250	4	1,72,573
Distt. Islamabad	5,74,763	20,356	2,731	—	18	35	5,97,903
Distt. Baramula	5,42,743	10,760	6,260	—	61	58	5,59,882
Distt. Muzaffarabad	2,22,013	4,490	10,933	—	10	1	2,37,447
	14,78,287	68,259	20,814	8	339	98	15,67,805

FRONTIER DISTRICTS

Distt. Ladakh	1,53,388	319	98	38,212	122	—	1,92,139
Distt. Gilgit	30,741	1,038	84	—	38	—	31,901
Pol. Agency Gilgit	64,199	326	8	—	11	—	64,544
	2,48,328	1,683	190	38,212	171	—	2,88,584
Grand Total	28,08,436	7,35,781	87,653	38,727	2,263	139	36,35,625

The population of Kashmir Valley according to 1931 census was: Muslims 12,56,274 and non-Muslims 74,084. Hindus were 63,769 only which meant less than 5½%. According to the March 1941 census, Muslims were 13,69,611 whereas the non-Muslims were 94,423. It came to about 524 non-Muslims in every 10,000 population in Kashmir valley and 97 out of every 10,000 persons in the Frontier districts of Ladakh and Gilgit. Thus non-Muslim percentage in the Valley came to 6½%. It means that during ten years ending March, 1941, there was an

increase of one per cent in the over-all ratio of non-Muslims as compared to Muslims, although the normal rate of growth of the latter is much higher than that of the former because of their almost total illiteracy and the institution of polygamy.

According to the census report of 1961, conducted by India, the figures for Jammu province are as follows:

Hindus	..	9,23,516
Muslims	..	5,98,492
Sikhs	..	46,000

which means Hindus 59%; Muslims 38%; Sikhs, Jains and others 3%. In 1941 census, Muslims constituted 61% in Jammu province. According to the 1961 census, Muslim population in Kashmir valley is 95%.

As shown above, the total non-Muslim population of Jammu province in 1941 census was 7,56,176. The district of Mirpur and the major portion of the district of Poonch now in the liberated territory had a non-Muslim population of 1,12,753. If Indian propaganda that they were all killed, is taken at its face-value, then it is reduced to 6,43,423. The Indian census of 1961 shows it as 9,23,516 which means an increase of 43% in the last 20 years; incredible! Of the non-Muslims living in areas since liberated, some were no doubt killed, though partly because of their collaboration with the Dogra army as the natural culmination of their deep interest in the Dogra dynasty, borne out of their common hatred of Muslims and mutually complimentary expediency of keeping them subjugated, but the great majority, however, was permitted to migrate and most of them have since settled in Punjab, Delhi, Bhopal, Bombay, Uttar Pradesh and even as far away as Calcutta. Indian Government's efforts to persuade them to resettle in the occupied territory could not succeed fully because of their psychological unpreparedness to live in an area over which shadows of war continue to hang, having already been once uprooted from similar surroundings. Again, the Sikh population of these areas in 1947 was above forty thousand and their over-whelming majority migrated to East Punjab. Even if the whole non-Muslim population had safely migrated to the Indian occupied Jammu province, the increase in twenty years comes to 22½% which is much higher than the national average in India, during this period. However, in view of the loss of life in course of the liberation war and the migration of others to India, the increase in no case is less than 33%. How did the non-Muslim population go up so much? Obviously, they have been brought from India under a plan which aims at gradually converting the State into a Hindu majority area partly out of distrust of local Muslims

and partly as a strategy against the implementation of United Nations' resolutions on plebiscite.

The total population of occupied Jammu and Kashmir in 1961 is reported to be 35,60,976, non-Muslims comprising 11,28,909. If Indian propaganda about the 'massacre' of all non-Muslims living in the areas now constituting Azad Kashmir is correct, then the increase in the non-Muslim population in the last twenty years is about 60%, but as all non-Muslims did not die as alleged by India, the actual increase even then is not less than 33%. That it should have jumped from a steady 16% for the last thirty years despite Dogra efforts to attract non-Muslims from outside, clearly shows the entry of a large number of non-Muslims, mostly landless peasants who have been settled on lands and properties abandoned by Muslims, forced out of the State from time to time since 1947.

According to the same census, the Muslim population of Kashmir valley is 18,14,109 while that of non-Muslims is 1,05,885 which represents roughly 5%. It is doubtful whether these figures are correct. In view of Indian Government's persistent anxiety to increase non-Muslim percentage and the consequent relaxation of laws that prohibited non-State nationals from acquiring immovable property and service rights etc., the non-Muslim population has, from all accounts, considerably increased. Thus according to the census report of 1941, the over-all Muslim population in the entire State was slightly more than 77.1%.

Among the languages spoken are Kashmiri, Punjabi, Dogri, Gojri, Tibetan, Shina, Balti and certain others belonging to the Dardic group which is neither Iranian nor Indo-Arian. According to the 1931 census, Ksahmiri language was spoken by fifteen lakhs which means about 47% of the total population while Punjabi is the mother tongue of nearly 30% and Dogri is spoken by 15% only. Punjabi is the mother-tongue of people in the districts of Muzaffarabad, Mirpur, Poonch, Reasi and Udhampur, while Kashmiri is the mother-tongue of both Pandits and Muslims, in the Valley, parts of Muzaffarabad, Dodah, Bhadarwah, parts of Poonch and Reasi. The Punjabi dialect is the same which is spoken in Punjab and Hazara in Pakistan. As per 1961 census, the Indian occupied territory has a 53.3 % Kashmiri-speaking majority.[1]

According to Mr. Vigne, who was in the Valley in 1836-37, Kashmiri language is composed of words from various languages with the following percentage: Persian 40%; Sanskrit 25%; Urdu 15%; Arabic 10% and other

1. B.L. Sharma p. 264.

languages 10%. Mr. Vigne has been followed by many an eminent writers including Mr. G.M. Sufi, the author of the monumental work "Kashir". Mr. Vigne stayed in the Valley only for a couple of months; his information is, therefore, second-hand and casual. Kashmiri being my mother-tongue, this writer has on numerous occasions compared Kashmiri words with their equivalents in Sanskrit, Bengali, Urdu, Persian, Arabic, Punjabi and English. Whatever be the percentage of other languages, Sanskrit, as spoken by Muslims, does not in any case represent more than 20%. The preponderance of Persian is undoubtedly very great but there is also a sprinkling of English words even in the dialect spoken by people who are illiterate and have never come in contact with any Englishman. Two such words which this writer has come across are: 'Pollute' and 'Fright'. The Kashmiri equivalents are 'پلیٹ' and 'فرٹھ'. Five exact idioms this writer has come across are: "cocks crow" = "سنگر مال", "cobbler's saturday" = "واتل بٹہ وار" "wooden-headed" = "ھچہ کلہ", "wet blanket" = "ایدر زٹ" and "to give grass" = دس گھاسہ

Mr. Grierson, the greatest authority on Indian languages, who compiled the first dictionary of Kashmiri language (one can imagine the stupendous labour put in by him when one realises that Kashmiri has mostly been only a spoken language), has in his 'Linguistic Survey of India' placed Kashmiri language in the Dardic branch of non-Sanskrit languages. According to Encyclopaedia Britannica also, "by origin it is the most southern member of the Dard group of the so-called Dardic languages".[1] Says Buhler, British representative in Srinagar who is known for his research on Sanskrit :

> "It has the greatest importance for the comparative grammar of the Indian vernaculars because, for instance, it so clearly reveals the manner in which the new cases of the declension have been formed from the old bases, a point which in other languages is exceedingly difficult......It differs, however, very considerably from all its Indian sister-languages. Nearest to it came Sindhi."

Says Sir Lawrence :

> "The songs of the Kashmiris are chiefly erotic and have the same turns of thought as are found in Persian poetry. The accent of the language is curiously like the English and I have often, when listening to Kashmiris, imagined that an Englishman was speaking."

The proportion of females to males is about 884 to 1000 respectively.

1 Encyclopaedia Britannica V. 13 p. 244.

It is highest in the Frontier regions (933) and lowest in Kashmir province (866). Marriages come comparatively late and less than one per cent of the male under fifteen years and about two per cent female of the same age were enumerated as married even before the Infant Marriages Prohibition Act was passed by the Indian Legislature. As a rule, people in the Valley do not marry their boys until they are earning-hands. As a whole, 53% male and 39% female are married. Polyandry is prevalent in Ladakh where every Budhist family sends one of its members, male or female, to the monasteries. Since India's massing of a large army in Ladakh, the number of illegitimate births has alarmingly increased. An important feature of social life is the almost total absence of caste distinction or tribalism among Muslims in the Valley. While in the areas that now constitute Azad Kashmir or such areas of Jammu province which are in Indian occupation, tribalism plays an important role in the affairs of the community, there is no such division in the Valley. It is only the economic status that determines social standing. The result is that Muslims are undivided and undisturbed by distinctions of caste or tribe. State Muslims in general and those of the Valley in particular, are deeply religious. Testifies Victor Jacquemont as far back as 1830:

> "If faith and profound piety exist upon Earth, it is among the Muslims (here)"[1].

Says Lt. Robert Thorpe :

> "The people of Kashmir, however, are possessed of many characteristics, both intellectual and moral which command our respect and admiration; and amongst them, the religion of Mohammad, although sullied by long contact with idolators, is still kept up with much of its ancient purity and with a devotion and enthusiasm that would not have disgraced the best days of Islamism."[2]

A common weakness, or perhaps a winter necessity of every Kashmiri is an earthen-pot woven into a basket and known as 'Kangri'. Burning charcoal is deposited in the pot which is then used for the warming of hands, feet and particularly the stomach. Each family member has his own Kangri. Sometimes it results in fires and burns but the people are so adept at its use that such accidents are infrequent and highly disproportionate to the risks involved. It seems that the abundance of fire-wood, the intensity of cold and the impoverishment of people by successive conquerers have led to its common use. The

1 Letters from India, p. 228.
2 Thorpe, p. 25.

following stanza from a poem—AN ODD TO KANGRI—represents, in a measure, the intense attachment of Kashmiris to it:

اے کا نگری ۔ اے کا نگری   قربان تو حور و پری
تو از پری نازک تری   از برگ گل رعنا تری
چون در بغل مے گیر مت   درد از دل من مے بری
ہر چند وصفت مے کنم   از وصف ازان بالا تری
حقا عجائب دلبری

Trans : Oh Kangri! Thou art
lovelier than Houris and Fairies,
Thou art more delicate than a Fairy
And fresher than a rose-petal,
When I take thee in my loving embrace,
The stresses and strains of life take leave of me.
Words fail me to adequately praise thee.
Truely, thou art a wonderful companion.

The world-famous Kashmiri Pandits belong to the Brahmin caste of Hindus. The great majority of Kashmiri—speaking Muslims and their descendants are converts from the Brahmin community. Kashmiri Pandits are known for their great intelligence and have held positions of trust and confidence under Muslim rule. Some are meat eaters and buy it from Muslim butchers. They are served by Muslim water-carriers and barbers. Contemporaries of our parents practised greater segregation than did our contemporaries but unlike their children, were more tolerant and less militant. Certainly they were more humane and less fanatical. Lawrence has given an interesting but factual description of how to distinguish a Pandit from a Muslim. Though social changes have marked the interval, the distinctions fairly subsist to this day. Says he:

"The Pandit wears the tuck of his white turban on the right, the Mussalman on the left. The Pandit fastens his gown on the left, the Mussalman on the right. The Pandit has long, narrow sleeves, the Mussalman short, full sleeves. It seems that the Mussalmans were enjoined to distinguish themselves from the Hindus, for I find that Mussalmans will invariably mount their ponies from the off side while the Pandits mount from the near side. And while the Pandit begins his ablutions from the left leg, the Mussalman invariably begins from the right leg. Other distinguishing pecularities may be mentioned. The Pandits wear tight drawers, head-dresses of narrow white cloth,

of twenty yards in length, and a smooth skullcap. They also retain a small lock of hair on their head, which is carefully guarded from the barber. Further, the Pandit uses his long narrow sleeves as a kind of glove, and though he may have put on his shoes with this glove, he does not hesitate to eat food with the same sleeve. Mussalmans on the contrary wear loose drawers, pagris of broad white cloth, never more than ten yards in length, skullcaps with raised patterns; they shave their heads entirely, and they would regard food touched by the sleeve as impure. There are many differences between the Mussalmani and the Panditani style of dress, and there are wide differences in their character. The Panditani wears a girdle, but no drawers. She has a white head-dress, and has no embroidery except on her sleeves and around the collar. She never wears leather shoes but sticks to the old-fashioned grass sandal. She is more devoted to her husband than to her children, and will never mention her husband's name. The Mussalmani wears no girdle, but if she be of good position, she will never stir out of the house without drawers. She wears a head-dress and has her tunic rightly embroidered. She uses leather shoes. She is more devoted to her children and thinks it no shame to mention her husband's name. Finally it is commonly said that the Pandit house-wife is a far better and more economical manager than the Mussalmani. Both Hindu women and Mussalmanis ride on ponies when occasion arises, man-fashion."[1]

Some foreign writers have directed not wholly justified slander against the inhabitants of Kashmir valley. While there is no denying that part of the criticism is genuine, there is equally no doubt that the greater part of it is based on ignorance of history, a very restricted contact with the local people and trivial experiences here and there as tourists. It is very unfair to the character of Kashmiris to judge them from the isolated experiences of tourists while dealing with boat-men known as 'Hanjis' or by the haggling indulged in by some of the 'pheriwallas'. Hanjis, it may be pointed out, are not actually an indigenous people but were brought from Ceylon by King Parbat Sen and having lived through centuries, socially as an exclusive community, have retained their historical traits for good or bad, as the case may be. As regards haggling in prices, it is not confined to Kashmir alone but is practised as an art all over the world except, of course, in a few countries on the Continent or the United States. Even in Europe, visitors to Greece, Italy and Yugoslavia have found no fixed prices in the market. It is not an uncommon sight in tourist resorts in the Mediterranean that the vendor asks a price of two thousand dollars for a necklace which with persuasion and perseverance, one is able to purchase for ten dollars only, provided the customer has

1 Lawrence, p. 252.

the nerve for haggling while in Kashmir the difference between the price claimed and that actually acceptable is not even a shadow of it.

Another criticism levelled against Kashmiris is that they are not a martial race and despite their extremely robust health, are not military-minded. The criticism again is only partially true. History is a standing witness to the fact that there is inherently nothing lacking in Kashmiris to make them as good soldiers as any in the world. During the reign of King Lalitaditya, a king of Kashmiri origin, Kashmir armies which consisted partly of the hill tribes and partly of the inhabitants of the Vale, conquered almost the whole of Punjab, parts of Afghanistan, the present tribal area, Peshawar, Ladakh and even parts of Kashgar. Again, during the reign of Sultan Shahabud-Din, a Sultan of Kashmiri descent, a Kashmiri army went as far as Multan and extended his dominion to large parts of north India. It is not without historical support that Iqbal spoke with pride:

در زمانے صف شکن ہم بودہ است
چیرہ و جانباز و پر دم بودہ است

Trans:

Once, intrepid and valiant and brave,
They pierced through the hordes of their foes.

Unfortunately, recruitment of Kashmiris to the Mughal army decreased mainly because of the unprecedented prosperity in the Valley where the kings, court ladies, princes and nobles went in caravan after caravan every spring and lavishly spent whatever they had earned or saved while in the plains. This can be judged from the fact that according to Ain-e-Akbari, the revenue of Kashmir was 30,11,619 kharwars which means 75,29,047 maunds of paddy. The figure is staggering when we consider the present deficit production in the State. The statistics of recruitment in the army anywhere in the world would show that economic prosperity results in corresponding decrease in the numbers of those who offer themselves for military service. In India and Pakistan recruitment in the army is heaviest from areas which are less-developed and it was one of the reasons why areas like Jhelum, Campbellpur and Rawalpindi etc. in Pakistan and Haryana and Gurgaon in East Punjab were deliberately kept economically undeveloped by the British. Another proof is furnished by the laws of conscription in force almost all over the Continent and the United States because opportunities for economic advancement being otherwise immense, career in the army has lost its attraction.

Kashmir Valley then was not what it is today—a densely populated area. Baron Charles Hugel estimated the total population of Kashmir Valley

before the earthquake and famine in 1832 at six lakhs. It could not thus be more than three to four lakhs at the time of Mughal conquest, more than two hundred and fifty years before Kashmir passed into Sikh hands. During this period, there were severe earthquakes in 1662, 1735, 1778 and 1803; there came a devastating flood in 1746 when ten thousand houses and all the bridges on Jhelum were washed away. With so much production and for such a small number of mouths, when considered in the light of peace and tranquillity that prevailed not only in the State but throughout the sub-continent, at least until the death of Aurangzeb, more than a hundred years after the Mughal conquest of Kashmir, the loss of interest in army service by the local people and the absence of necessity for the Mughals to recruit them, can be easily appreciated. Besides, the Mughals though good benevolent rulers, had no particular interest in seeing that Kashmiris were either maintained or preserved as a martial race. The Mughals were succeeded by Afghans. While Mughals made India their home, married, lived and died on the soil, the case with the Afghans was entirely different. Theirs, undoubtedly, was one of the harshest regimes that has ever taken hold of Kashmir. There are instances to show that the King at Kabul was kind and considerate but his Governors mostly were out on an expedition of plunder and rapacity. They befriended only a few Muslim and Pandit families but on the whole considered it in their interest to suppress whatever little remained of the military spirit of Kashmiris. The case with the Sikhs was far worse. They and their Dogra successors placed a complete ban on the recruitment of Kashmiris in the army; so much so that even a few score of families who had, on account of their official position, maintained their liaison with the army or held ranks in the Mughal and Afghan armies, were also debarred from joining military service. The Mughals and Afghans, however, had placed no restriction on the acquisition or keeping of arms by the local habitants, with the result that for personal protection against wild animals which frequented the small habitation as it then was, Kashmiris did not wholly lose their acquaintance with fire-arms. The attitude of the Dogras may be judged from the following :—

> "Before the time of Maharajah Gulab Singh, (children from) the different wards of Srinagar city used to turn out with slings and stones, and played a very earnest and serious game. But Gulab Singh did not approve of this fighting spirit and put a stop to the mimic war-fare."[1]

Under Dogra rule, only Hindu Rajputs could keep arms without licence but Kashmiri Muslims could not keep them even with a licence because their applications were always turned down as a matter of State policy. Before 1947, the Dogra army consisted of 13 Battalions, of which only

1 Walter Lawrence, p. 255.

eleven percent were Muslims and even they were Muslim Rajputs from Jammu province. Not a single Kashmiri Muslim was amongst them. False stories were concocted and circulated to cover up this patent discrimination. One such story told to the Army Minister Wake-field by Hari Singh when the former sought permission for the recruitment of Kashmiris, is reproduced below in his own words:

> "In the army reorganization, I pleaded for the enlistment of a double Company of Kashmiris but one day His Highness told me that his grand-father Maharajah Ranbir Singh had raised a whole regiment and having uniformed and drilled them for six months in Srinagar, gave orders that they should march to Jammu. A deputation of their officers waited upon him with a petition pointing out that in making arrangements for their march, no provision had been made for police for their protection. The regiment was disbanded."[1]

The story is historically incorrect and does not find support from any contemporary writer although many Englishmen were in the State throughout the reign of Ranbir Singh. For instance, Drew spent almost ten years with him. Girdlestone, Buhler, Mrs. Ansley, Doctor Neve and Doctor Thompson have covered this period but the incident which must have gained notoriety, finds no place in their writings. There is no record that Ranbir Singh ever attempted to raise as much as a platoon of Kashmiri Muslims. A dutiful son whose father had even prevented mimic war-fare among children could not have trusted them so soon-after as to raise a double company from amongst them. It is, however, possible that a few stray recruits in early fifties or towards the close of forties may have extricated themselves from being sent to Gilgit to subjugate fellow-Muslims by manipulating this device. The explanation may be that the Dogras could not trust the Kashmiri-speaking Muslims as to recruit them in the army, but that is one thing and to say that they are not fit for military service is a total slander. Major General Ralph Young wrote about them in 1868:

> "The men are a very fine set—splendid chests and shoulders—it is difficult to believe in the cowardice attributed to them. They are oppressed undoubtedly but yell out most vigorously."[2] (*July* 1867).

The first Settlement Commissioner Mr. Wingate wrote from personal experience:—

"The Kashmiri requires more and more frequent nourishment and

1 Recollections, p. 193-94.
2 India Office Library Eur. M 56.

warmer clothing than his brother of the plains. Not only does the climate necessitate more but the Kashmiri has the body and strength of an elephant."[1]

That this allegation is just a canard, is proved from the fact that among the Kashmiri Muslims, who migrated during the Sikh and Dogra rule, thousands have shown their valour not only in the wars of 1914 and 1939 but also in the last two wars. In fact some of them have risen to the highest ranks in the army. Among them are Lt. General Abdul Hameed Khan, former Chief of Staff of the Pakistan Army, Lt. General Khawaja Wasiud-Din of Dacca, Lt. General Riaz Hussain, Lt. General Riaz Azim, Lt. General Nasim Mahmud, Lt. General K. M. Farooqi, Major General Iftikhar, Major General Khawaja Masud, Major General Shaukat Malik, Major General Safdar Butt, Major General Dar and Major General Abdul Qaiyum who, like Brigadiers Qaiyum and Bashir, migrated to Pakistan in 1947-48. Pakistan Air Force's first Commander-in-Chief, Air Marshal Asghar Khan also hails from the State. In fact, the person who has been acclaimed as Hero of the September-1965 war and the lone recipient in the said war of the country's highest gallantry award "Nishan-e-Haider", Major Aziz Bhatti was a Kashmiri; his grand-father had migrated from a village in Baramula district.[2] So is the Chief of Staff of the Pakistan Navy Admiral Sharif who was awarded 'Hilal-e-Jurat' in 1971-war. One of the most decorated Indian soldiers of his time, Subedar Shamas Khan from Mirpur who retired in 1899, was a Kashmiri. The first Muslim from the State who became Major in the undivided Indian army, Major Manga Khan was a Kashmiri. The leading wrestlers in the sub-continent, Gama, the Rustam-i-Zaman, Imam Bakhsh, Bholu brothers etc., are all Kashmiris.

The discrimination was not confined to the army. Kashmiris generally and Kashmiri Muslims particularly, when they left the borders of the State and settled outside, quickly rose to highest positions of trust, responsibility and influence; whether it was the field of administration or that of literature, they had an opportunity of showing their worth. That they did so in an atmosphere of healthy competition is a standing proof of their deliberate exclusion from the governance of their land by their rulers. Iqbal has very aptly summed up the position in the following verse:

زیستن اندر حد ساحل خطاست
ساحل ما سنگے اندر راہ ما است

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1 Quoted by Digby in Condemned Unheard, p. 67.
2 Asghar Ali Ghural, p. 21.

Trans:

Living within its boundaries was his misfortune;
It stood like a rock in the path of his advance.

Khawaja Nazim-ud-Din, Pakistan's second Governor-General and Prime Minister, Khawaja Shahab-ud-Din, ex-Home Minister, Maulana Syed Anwar Shah of Deoband, Professor Ahmed Shah Bukhari, Assistant Secretary General of the United Nations, Zulfikhar Ahmed Bukhari, ex-Director General Radio Pakistan, Maulana Attaullah Shah Bukhari as well as Khan Abdul Qaiyum Khan (the ancestors of the last four came from Kreri and Wanigam, two neighbouring villages near Patan in Baramula tehsil), Dr. Yusuf, ex-Prime Minister Afghanistan, Abdur Rehman Bey, the Turkish Ambassador to Afghanistan between the two World Wars, Mr. Saeed Hassan, Deputy Chairman Planning Commission as well as Pakistan's permanent representative at the United Nations, Ambassadors Qaisar, Inayatullah, Fida Hassan, Khawaja Attaullah and Ahmed Saeed Kirmani, Mian Amin-ud-Din, Governor of Punjab and Baluchistan, Sheikh Masood Sadiq and Sheikh Sadiq Hassan, ex-Ministers of the Punjab Government, Agha Hasher, the pioneer dramatist of the sub-continent, Justice Noor of the Patna High Court, Justice Ghulam Hassan Butt of the Indian Supreme Court, Justices Din Mohammad, Shaukat, Masood, Nazir Mahmud, Iqbal, Pal, Nasim Hussain Shah, Javed Iqbal and Malik Saeed of the Lahore High Court, Justice Badiuzzaman Kaikaus of the Supreme Court, Sheikh Imtiaz Ali, former Vice Chancellor Punjab University, Agha Abdul Karim Shorish, Dr. Abdul Rauf of the Nishtar Medical College, Khawaja Mohammad Safdar, former leader of the Opposition in the Senate, and besides hundreds of other important officials and leaders of public thought, Nawab Samiullah Khan of Dacca, the founder of the All India Muslim League and Allama Iqbal, the poet-philosopher who propounded the Pakistan demand in his presidential address at the Muslim League session at Allahabad in 1930, also were the descendants of emigrees from the State. It was the denial of opportunity that stood in the way of their progress in the State. This is again demonstrated by the fact that fresh arrivals from the State after 1947, descendants of emigrees from other parts of the State and even the residents of areas now constituting Azad Kashmir, have risen to great heights. Mr. Qudratullah Shahab, Agha Mohammad Hussain, ex-Engineer-in-Chief Telegraph and Telephones, Mr. Mahboobul Haque, ex-Chief Economist, Planning Commission, Lt. General Akbar and Major General Rahim are all State nationals while General Tika Khan, former Chief of Staff is the descendant of an emigree from Punjan in Kotli tehsil. Sardar Mohammad Iqbal, former Chief Justice of the Lahore High Court, Mr. Yusuf Buchh, Special Assistant to the Prime Minister, Mr. Khurshid Hassan

Mir, ex-Central Minister, Dr. Khairat Ahmed, Vice Chancellor Punjab University, Dr. Muzaffar Shah, President Punjab Medical Practitioners Association, Dr. Assadullah Lone, Professor ENT KEM College Lahore, Mr. Yusuf Shah, Senior Vice President United Bank of Pakistan, Mr. Mohammad Shafi Rathore, Vice President National Bank of Pakistan, Professor Hassan Shah, ex-Registrar of the Universities of Islamabad and Peshawar, Naval Commanders Fazli and Dar, Air Force Wing Commander G. M. Khan, Sheikh Ghulam Mohiud Din, A. K. Income Tax Commissioner, Khawaja Mohammad Amin Gani, Joint Secretary Government of Pakistan, Khawaja Sana Ullah Shamim, Khawaja Salamuddin Niaz and Khawaja Mohammad Iqbal Butt, ex-A.K. Ministers and prominent businessmen Khawaja Ghulam Mohammad Lone and Khawaja Ghulam Ahmed Rishi are some of the more prominent persons who migrated to Pakistan as refugees in 1947-48 and like many of their compatriots, rose to prominence by dint of hard work and merit. Among the leading Pandit families in India are Nehrus, Saprus, Kunzroos, Wanchoos, Kauls and Takrus.

This shows that there is nothing inherently wrong in the character of the Muslims of Kashmir; it is only a question of opportunity for advancement and betterment which had been so cruely denied under the Sikh and Dogra rule. Many an eminent foreign writers who have spent a life-time in Kashmir and have had the opportunity of closely studying and observing the traits in the Kashmiri character have left ample evidence testifying to the fact that the Kashmiri is what his ruler has made him and that there is nothing inherently wrong in his character. The Settlement Commissioner, Sir Walter Lawrence, whose intimate knowledge of Kashmiris far exceeds that of any other person from outside the State, has said of them:—

> "But I soon grew to understand that the Kashmiri, like other orientals, has two sides to his character as distinct as light and darkness. His great yearning is to be left alone to till his fields and weave his woollen cloth. The official visit, which to us officials seems so pleasant to all concerned, sends the pulse of the village up many degrees, and those are happy who dwell far away from the beaten tracks. The dark side of the Kashmiri is revealed when he is in the presence of officials. He has good reason to hate and distrust them, and his only weapon against them is deceit. His light side is seen when he is in his field or with his family in the house. Take as an instance the relations of a Kashmiri cultivator with the village shopkeepers. The shopkeeper (wani) is a Musalman and must not take interest. He lends money to the peasants on a system known as wad. A man borrows fifty rupees

and promises to pay this within a year in blankets, ghi, apples, grain etc. The rate fixed by the wani for blankets will be three rupees, whereas the market price at which wani will sell is three rupees 8 annas, or 4 rupees. No bond (Hujat) is signed by the borrower, and the only record of the transaction is an entry in the daily ledger of the wani. I have always made a point of talking with the wanis whenever I see a village shop, and they are unanimous in saying that they never make a bad debt and they are never obliged to sue a debtor. This state of things does not argue that the Kashmiri peasants are dishonest.

In the statistical chapter, facts will be found which show that crime is almost non-existent in Kashmir. Crimes of dishonesty may be said to be absolutely non-existent among the peasants. Property is entirely safe, and during the six years which I have spent in the villages, I have never heard of crimes of theft, or burglary being committed by agriculturists. This surely points to the fact that the Kashmiris are not the dishonest people they are represented to be."[1]

Arthur Neve who spent 30 years in Kashmir has made the following observations:—

"In addition to their alert intelligence, their quick wit, and artistic qualities, many of them are not lacking in elements of heroism. Some years ago I was camped near a village, and hearing shouts, looked and saw cottages in a blaze. We ran to the spot. Two thatched houses were a sheet of flame, others immediately adjoining were in danger of catching. The villagers were working with marvellous courage and energy. Almost stripped of garments, but smeared with wet mud, with only skull-caps and loin-clothes they dashed into the flames, trying to rescue one or two women. With poles and forks the thatch of surrounding cottages were stripped off, and scrambling on the roof timbers, the burning rafters were hewn through or cut away. The men worked like demons, or rather like fire brigade heroes, as if possessed by a spirit that set all dangers at defiance, with bare feet walking on red-hot timbers, dashing through the flames, and in half an hour, into which seemed compressed the agonies and the efforts of a lifetime, the fire was got under. Only two lives had been lost; women trying to rescue their property had been trapped in burning rooms by blazing timbers falling across the door way. The rest of the houses, all huddled together, entirely built of pine logs, with inflam-

1 Sir Walter Lawrence, p. 5.

mable gable thatched roofs, were saved, though at no slight cost to the men in the way of burns and bruises. More than once have I seen such a sight."[1]

"As one here and another there, steps out to challenge a wrong, to champion a right, to strive after an ideal, though his confession exposes him to ostracism and to active persecution, I have seen the promise of the manhood that is to be."[2]

Says Pearce Gervis:—

"All these epidemics and natural calamities have come upon the people, but in addition there have, throughout the centuries, been the ever-present conquerors, oppressors and masters who have taken and held the country in their power, each of the rulers with different edicts, each with changing moods, some kindly, others inhuman. For the most part over the years one community of the people had death always before them as the punishment for failing to do physically or accept mentally that which their masters forced upon them.

They were starved by them of those necessities of life which they had both made and grown in plenty with sufficient and more to keep them and their families. They learned to lie in order to save themselves and their loved ones from destruction at times; they learned to trust no stranger, for fear that he might have to rob them; they learned to hoard and hide against the famine which might come on them through the elements or the invaders, and because of that and their having little, to steal when the chance presented itself, they learned to fear the sword and the gun for what both had done to them and theirs. They learned to appear poor, and in doing so to be filthy, so that those who taxed them might be deceived into extracting of what little they had to treasure."[3]

Mr. E. F. Knight of the London Times has recorded the following incident:—

"The boatmen are kind to their children, but will not permit them to shirk their tasks. Thus, today the smallest child, a pretty little girl of three or four, had to take her little lesson. She was too small to do, but she was put on the back to trot alongside her brothers and get accustomed to stepping out barefooted on the rough track. She came to a place where the path, cut in the face of the steep mud cliff, was only a few inches broad for a short distance, and where a false

1 & 2 Dr. Arthur Neve, p. 305 and 306.
3 Pearce Gervis, p. 305.

step would mean a ducking. The little maiden got frightened, and refused to attempt the dangerous passage; but the boat did not stop for her; her parents laughed, and left her there weeping. Seeing that no one would return to pick her up, she philosophically wiped her eyes and tripped across the place quite merrily. Her nervousness had been mostly simulated; Kashmiris, even at four years old, had good heads on precipices, and the little humbug advanced without fear when she realised that malingering was useless. She was then brought on board, was much applauded and caressed, and was rewarded with apples for having done her lesson like a good child. One nice trait of these people is their keen affection for their children. These half-naked boat urchins live happy lives, and I think many English children would like to exchange places with them and enjoy this free outdoor existence for a time on the rivers of the Happy Valley."[1]

Frederick Drew has remarked:—

"They are not unattractive, being an intellectual people, and characterised by great ingenuity and sprightliness, I think also that they have the elements of what, in more fortunate circumstances, might be a fine character, but dwelling in a fertile and beautiful valley, surrounded by hardy and warlike tribes, they have for ages been subject to that oppression which destroys national hope and virtue."[2]

Mr. Tyndale Biscoe who spent nearly fifty years in Kashmir as a missionary and pioneered the introduction of Western education, says in his book "Kashmir in Sunlight and Shade":—

"But why are they so different from the people living around them? Because they happen to live in one of the most beautiful countries on earth and therefore other people have coveted it. Kashmir has been conquered and reconquered by invaders, who have murdered, oppressed and enslaved their ancestors and so ground the life and heart out of them that their betterselves have been crushed. It is quite possible that if the Britishers had had to undergo what the Kashmiris have suffered in the past, we might have lost our manhood. I recall instances in my own school life when boys have been severely bullied and so lost their manhood, for their betterself had been crushed out of them."[3]

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1 Where Three Empires Meet, p. 58.
2 Jammu and Kashmir Territories.
3 Biscoe p. 79.

Forster records in his Travels, published in 1798:—

"The Kashmiris are so whimsically curious that when any trivial question is proposed to them, its intention and purpose is enquired into with a string of futile interrogatories before the necessary information is given."[1]

This is what Sir Lawrence has to say about their character:—

"The Kashmiri inspite of his abject condition is a very obstinate and a determined person and in cases where he consideres that the assessment was too high, he has steadily declined to pay the excess."

"Though loud in urging his wordly claims, the Kashmiri is extremely quiet under visitations such as earthquakes and cholera. Trustworthy eye-witnesses state that Kashmiris sat silent in the earthquakes of 1885. And in the great cholera of 1892 (which killed 18,000 people), I was in a badly stricken part and was much struck by the intense silence which prevailed in the villages. There was no wailing for the dead and the people seemed to pass the day sitting quiet in the village grave-yard. They wholly declined to attend me at my village inspections and said that as life was so uncertain, it seemed almost wicked to concern themselves with things of this world...."[2]

"They were quick in argument and they never abandon a case unless they are convinced that it is hopeless and they always insist on knowing the grounds of a decision...."[3]

"He is an excellent cultivator when he is working for himself. He is a good gardener and has a considerable knowledge of horticulture. He can weave excellent woollen cloth and can make first-rate baskets. He can build himself a house, can make his own sandals (of grass) and makes his own ropes. There is scarcely a thing which he cannot do....In his home-life the Kashmiri cultivator is at his best. He *is kind to his wife and children and one rarely hears of divorce scandals or immorality among the villagers.* A woman who has behaved badly is a marked character and public opinion is always against her.... *I have often come across a woman in some deserted spot singing a wailing song for a husband dead long ago.* Crime is almost unknown in the villages. Property is absolutely safe and I have never heard of such a thing as the theft of crops. Offences against the person are extremely rare and when Kashmiris quarrel, they call one another bad names and

1 V·II, p. 25.
2&3 Lawrence, p. 276 & 277.

will occasionally go so far as to knock off a turban or seize an adversary by his effeminate gown."[1]

And finally:

"I think that it is to their credit that it (their character) is not worse, considering the few chances they have for becoming truthful, manly and self-respecting. The word that is often on their lips and they deplore the fact that they have no honour in the eyes of their rulers or of their fellows. A man who can be beaten and robbed by anyone with a vestige of authority soon ceases to respect himself and his fellow-men and it is uneven to look for the virtues of a free people among the Kashmiris and unfair to twist them with the absence of such virtues. The Kashmiri is what his rulers have made him."[2]

Ian Stephens wrote about them in 1950:—

"But the impression thus created of servility and greed of vice and double-facedness, was in part incorrect and unfair. If you possessed a little Urdu, an enquiring mind and friendliness, you could also find much pleasant qualities. The Kashmiris of the Vale, gentle and unvalorous in temperament, have been dealt with very harshly by history. For centuries they were subjugated or intrigued against by stronger neighbours, rival imperialisms; bossed or exploited successively by Mughals and Afghans, Sikhs, Dogras and British;............prolonged victimisation and uncertainty seem to have brought all their worst attributes to the surface, leaving others to await gradual discovery. Many Kashmiris are gifted with a vivid aesthetic sense. Others perhaps not so endowed, nevertheless have wonderful aptitude in handicrafts. The produce of the petty artisans, working so hard for a pittance is astonishing; and they can be dependable and honest as well as industrious. A joke and a kind-heart yield excellent results."[3]

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1 Lawrence, p. 277.
2 Horned Moon, p. 205.
3 Lawrence, p. 283.

CHAPTER INDEX

ENTER THE SIKHS

CHAPTER II

Enter the Sikhs

It was in 1585 A.D., during the reign of Akbar, that the Mughals annexed Kashmir and deposed its last local ruler Yusuf Shah Chak, whose queen, Haba Khatoon, mad in separation of her husband, interned a thousand miles away, gave vent to her tormented soul in soul-stirring songs that have tormented Kashmiris, generation after generation for their abiding pathos. The Mughal rule lasted till 1752 when it passed into Afghan hands in consequence of an invasion by Ahmad Shah Abdali. Kashmir enjoyed unique prosperity during the Mughal rule. Fond of palatial buildings and refreshing gardens, the picturesque Vale provided them with the requisite climate and an ideal environment. The world-famous Mughal gardens in Kashmir are a standing proof of the famous saying that they built like Titans and finished like Romans. Frederic Drew, one time Head of the Forest and Geology departments and later Governor of Ladakh during the reign of Ranbir Singh, testifies :

> "It was also frequently visited by the Emperors themselves in the hot weather and it was these journeys of the Court that brought the name of Kashmir to the ears of the Westerners; it was this period when its fame in Europe arose; for the successive Emperors—Akbar, Jahangir, Shah Jehan and Aurangzeb—both constructed palaces and gardens whose position in the midst of lovely scenery and delicious air gave them a reputation beyond what their architecture alone could merit; and also filled these with a Court whose magnificence drawn from the resources of half India, had never before and has never since been equalled in that mountain kingdom."[1]

1 Jammu and Kashmir Territories.

Says Forster:

> "Encouraged by the liberality and indulgence of the Mughals, they (Kashmiris) gave a loose to their pleasures and the bent of their genius. They appeared in gay apparel, constructed costly buildings and were much addicted to the pleasures of the table. The interests of the province (of Kashmir) were so strongly favoured at the Court that every complaint against its governors was attentively listened to and any attempt to molest the people, restrained or punished. In the reign of Aurangzeb when the revenue of the different portions of the empire exceeded that of the present day (1783), the sum collected in Kashmir amounted to 3½ lakhs of rupees."[1]

Under Afghans, as under the Mughals, Kashmir was administered by a Governor, one of whom, Amir Khan Jawan-Sher built the Amira Kadal (bridge) and Shergarhi palace which still houses the Secretariat of the occupied Kashmir Government; Atta Mohammad Khan rebuilt the Hariparbat fort. Their rule lasted till 1819 when the State was conquered by Maharaja Ranjit Singh.

RANJIT SINGH

Maharaja Ranjit Singh was the son of one Mahan Singh, Head of one of the twelve Sikh confederacies better known as "Sikh Misls". On the death of his father, Ranjit succeeded to the confederacy known as "Sukerchakias". After Zaman Shah went back to Kabul to suppress an internal revolt, Lahore city with its adjoining areas passed into the hands of Sikh Chieftains, Chet Singh, Sahib Singh and Mohr Singh. Tired of their misrule, the citizens sent a secret deputation to Ranjit, inviting him to capture the city. Already on the look-out of an excuse to occupy the prestigious city, Ranjit seized the opportunity and captured it in 1799. Sometime later when gifts were exchanged between Zaman Shah, the titular ruler of the Punjab and Ranjit Singh, among the gifts sent by the latter were some pieces of artillery which the Shah had lost while crossing Chenab during his last visit and which had been salvaged by the latter. As a token of appreciation, Zaman Shah conferred upon him the title of Raja. Consequently at a darbar held on 12th April 1801, one Baba Sahib Singh Bedi, a direct descendant of Guru Nanak, daubed him with saffron paste and proclaimed him the Maharaja of Punjab.

After consolidating his position in the Punjab by subduing several chieftains who did not voluntarily acknowledge his supremacy, Ranjit had his eyes fixed on the Jammu and Kashmir State. The reasons were simple. Towards the south of his kingdom the Britishers were fairly-well

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1 Forster's Travels, Vol. II, p. 23.

entrenched. They considered Sutlej as their natural frontier and lost no time in conveying to Ranjit Singh that any military activity beyond it would not be tolerated. Ranjit had before him the fate of Bengal, Mysore, Hyderabad, the Marhattas and scores of other kingdoms which had, one by one, through conflict with the Britishers, been wiped out. He did not therefore want to risk a war with them and that explains why all through his life he was always at pains to cultivate their friendship. Towards the north were the Afghans and although he had been able to capture Peshawar and its adjoining areas, it had cost him considerably in men, money and material. The realisation, therefore, seems to have dawned that any further military activity on this side would be a highly expensive adventure, apart from being uncertain of the result. Therefore, the only territory that now remained before him for quenching his thirst for conquest, was Jammu and Kashmir. As a first-step, he sought an assurance from the Britishers that they would not stand in the way of its subjugation. The Britishers had their own strategy. They were concerned about Czarist expansion. They apprehended Russo-Afghan collaboration for an invasion of India. It was, therefore, in their interests, as they thought then, to strengthen Ranjit Singh and his dominion which could not only act as a buffer between them and the Afghans but could also naturally get him involved on their side, in his own interest, against any such invasion.

It was the life ambition of Ranjit to visit the Valley. The depth of his longing may be imagined from the following letter sent to the Kashmir Governor, Col. Mian Singh:

> "Would that, I could only once in my life enjoy the delight of wandering through the gardens of Kashmir, fragrant with almond-blossoms, and sitting on the fresh green turf."[1]

Unfortunately for him, the longing was destined to remain unrealised. So the governor got prepared a special Kashmiri carpet with a green background dotted with little pink spots and interspersed with tiny little pearls like dots, which according to Pandit Anand Kaul in "Jammu and Kashmir State", looked like green turf with pink-petals of almond blossoms following on it and dew glistening thereon as in spring time.

> "This was a master piece of the Kashmir carpets weaver art. It was presented to the Maharajah at Lahore and as soon as he saw it, he was so struck by beauty of design executed in such artistic excellence that he rolled himself thereon in ecstasy, feigning to be rolling on

1 Bamzai p. 582.

the real Kashmiri turf. The chief weavers of this exclusive carpet Fazal Jan, Jabbar Khan and Jamal Joo were given a reward of a pair of golden bracelets each by the Maharaja."[1]

In 1801 when Shah Mahmood rose in revolt against Zaman Shah, the ruler of Afghanistan, Abdullah Khan, the brother of Atta Mohammad Khan, the then governor of Kashmir, who had already declared his independence, escaped from Bala Hissar fort and appeared in Srinagar. It was his misfortune that his assumption of supreme authority was followed, in quick succession, by natural calamities causing great distress. In 1804 there occurred a severe earthquake. In 1805 there came a devastating flood and in 1806 the winter was so severe that rivers and lakes were frozen and remained so for many months.

Shah Shujah who ascended the Kabul throne in 1803 came to Peshawar in 1807 and personally supervised the despatch of a punitive force under the command of one Sher Mohammad Khan against Abdullah Khan and his brother Atta Mohammad Khan with a view to re-annex the province to Kabul. Crossing Muzaffarabad by forced marches, Sher Mohammad won the battle which was fought in Sopore. Next day he entered Srinagar and sent his son Atta Mohammad Khan to capture the Hari Parbat fort. The siege lasted three months until the death of Abdullah Khan whose body was carried to Kabul for burial. Sher Mohammad Khan stayed only for five months and then retired to Afghanistan, leaving his son Atta Mohammad in charge of the administration. Mr. Bamzai has said of them :

> "Abdullah Khan was a just and able administrator. He gave peace to the province and looked after the well-being of the people.. .... Atta Mohammad was an enlightened ruler. He took deep and personal interest in restoring peaceful conditions in the Valley and rehabilitating its shattered agricultural and commercial structure. He was a patron of learning and art. He used to hear and decide suits personally with scrupulous justice."[2]

With the capture of Kabul in 1808 by Shujah's erstwhile enemy Mahmood, while he was in Peshawar, it was now the turn of the 2nd Atta Mohammad Khan to declare his independence. The expedition sent against him under the command of Akram Khan Bamzai was defeated in a battle fought in Baramula, Bamzai's forces having entered the Valley through Muzaffarabad.

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1 Bamzai p. 5B2.
2 Bamzai, p. 416.

Sometime latter, a meeting between Ranjit Singh and Shah Mahmood took place at Rawalpindi. The Shah had with him an army of twelve thousand. He wanted to invade Kashmir to punish Atta Mohammad Khan for having repudiated Kabul's overlordship but for some reason or other, the Shah himself abandoned, for the time being, his plan for an immediate invasion. Meanwhile, Shah Shujah had again, after this meeting, regained power but only for a brief period of four months. He escaped to Kashmir in the hope of assuming control of the territory but was taken a prisoner by Atta Mohammad Khan and imprisoned in the Hariparbat fort. Among his relations who moved to Lahore, obviously for protection against persecution by new Kabul rulers, was his senior wife, Wafa Begum, who contacted Ranjit Singh and undertook to offer the world-famous diamond KOH-I-NOOR as a reward if he was able to secure the freedom of her husband and bring about his reunion with the family at Lahore.

Ranjit Singh who, according to Emily Eden, as quoted by Khushwant Singh was "exactly like a mouse with grave whiskers and one eye", apart from having 22 married wives, also maintained a large "harem" of concubines among whom was a bevy of Kashmiri girls who were dressed as soldiers and rode out with him on ceremonial occasions.[1] The stately Moran, better known as Moran Sarkar, a Muslim courtesan from Amritsar, who was his sweet-heart-cum-wife, once asked Ranjit Singh: "Where were you when God was distributing good looks?" "When you were occupied with your looks", spontaneously replied the unruffled one-eyed Maharaja "I was busy seeking power".[2]

Ranjit had many sons but the only one admitted and accepted as legitimate was Kharak Singh born to his second wife Raj Kaur, sister of the Nakkai Sardar. This marriage had taken place in 1798. Re-named Datar Kaur after marriage, she was popularly known as "Mai Naikan". In 1812, on the occasion of the marriage of Kharak Singh, Ranjit invited the Governor-General, the Commander-in-Chief and other British officers to attend the ceremonies. The Governor-General did not come but was represented by Col. Ochterlony. It was during these festivities which provided an ideal cover for serious talks without raising any suspicions around that the British gave their approval to a Sikh invasion and annexation of Kashmir. Restoration of Shah Shujah to Kabul throne appears to have been a matter of fundamental British policy in the region for a long time. As one of the objectives of the invasion was his deliverance from imprisonment, the crafty British might have been delighted at the prospect of his release without their own involvement.

1&2 Khushwant, p. 291.

It should be no surprise if evidence is unveiled in future revealing that the invasion itself was British-inspired.

In December, 1812 during a meeting, Fateh Mohammad Khan, the Wazir of Mahmood Khan, had with Ranjit Singh at Rohtas in the Jhelum district, the latter agreed to the use of his territory by an Afghan force for an invasion of Kashmir through the Bhimber route. Ranjit also agreed to provide a part of the force. In return for the permission and assistance, he was promised half of the loot and rupees nine lacs out of Kashmir's annual revenue.[1] It was in this background that a large army under the joint command of Dewan Mohkam Chand and Sardar Dal Singh left Jhelum on 1st December, 1812. The Afghan force under Wazir Fateh Mohammad Khan which left simultaneously, was the first to reach Srinagar. Atta Mohammad Khan finding himself unable to face the combined onslaught, not only freed Shujah but also crowned him king of Kashmir. The king, however lost no time in deserting the king-maker and voluntarily came to the Sikh camp, perhaps because of anxiety about his 'harem' at Lahore which was at their mercy—a self-imposed weakness, universally shared by Muslim Kings and Nawabs. Fateh Khan captured Hariparbat and Shergarhi; Atta Mohammad Khan fled without a fight but there arose a dispute between Dewan Mohkam Chand and Wazir Fateh Khan about the payment of rupees nine lacs to the Sikh Durbar as the first instalment of the revenue which was being demanded in advance. The Wazir declined to pay the amount claiming that the Sikh army had made no contribution at all. On receipt of this information, Ranjit Singh ordered the capture, in retaliation of Attock fort which was held by Jehan Dad Khan, a brother of Atta Mohammad Khan. Jehan Dad Khan like his brother in Srinagar, lacking stomach for a fight, followed in his foot-steps and voluntarily handed it over to Faqir Aziz-ud-Din, the representative of Ranjit Singh.

At the same time, Dewan Mohkam Chand returned to Lahore alongwith Shah Shujah whose family had been living in Mubarak Haveli claimed to have been built by Abul Fazal, the famous courtier of Akbar. The fugitive king attempted to put off the handing over of the diamond claiming that it had been pawned away with someone at Kandhar. Just when the restless countdown of months and days to be the proud possessor of the priceless metal in the line of the Great Mughals was at long last reduced to hours and minutes and the essentially irrepressible human ambition of wearing the glittering diamond that had adorned the crowns of Taimur's progeny, was just at hand, to be told that the diamond was in a foreign land over which he had no control, was bound

1 Khushwant, p. 241.

to have inflamed Ranjit. He must have felt to have been cheated. Shah Shujah and his family was thereupon placed under house-arrest and simultaneously Ranjit offered a sum of rupees three lacs in cash and a jagir carrying rupees fifty thousand annual income in exchange for the diamond. The offer was accepted but fifty days interval was requested for and granted. At the expiry of this period, Ranjit Singh rode in State to the Haveli and amidst great pomp and show, personally received the diamond from Shah Shujah. According to Khushwant Singh, its acquisition had cost the Maharaja, apart from monetary expenses incurred on the expedition, a thousand lives in Kashmir.[1] There is no evidence that the money was either paid or the jagir ever granted. Even the 'scientific' British seem to have fallen for the popular superstitious belief that the diamond carries some curse and therefore, brings ill-luck to the ruler who wears it; consequently it decorates not the crown of the reigning sovereign but that of the poor Queen-Mother[1].

مرے کو مارے شاہ مدار

It remains on display in the London Tower. Since acquisition by the British, it has been considerably reduced in size. It is white in colour and perhaps two inches square. This writer saw it in November, 1973.

SIKHS SUFFER DEFEAT

The second Kashmir invasion followed closely on the heels of the first. As the road to Srinagar passed through Bhimber principality, Ranjit Singh had as early as 1811, soon after the lifting of the three-month old siege of Multan, annexed it to his kingdom. The ruling dynasty was founded in the 14th or 15th century by a cadet of a Chib family claiming descent from the Katoch Rajas of Kangra. Sultan Khan, its last ruler, declining to accept Ranjit as his overlord, chose to give him an unequal battle in vindication of his independence. A small chieftain, with comparatively very limited resources in men and material, he was easily defeated. The Bhimber town was plundered by the Sikh army, the Sultan taken a prisoner and removed to Lahore where he remained in captivity for seven years until Ranjit felt the necessity of releasing him for being used both as a guide as well as a comrade-in-arms in his final onslaught against Kashmir.

Fateh Mohammad Khan did not stay for long in Srinagar. After putting his brother Azim Khan in charge, he retired towards Peshawar and made an unsuccessful attempt to capture the fort at Attock. Azim Khan appointed influential Pandits like Sahaj Ram Dhar and Dewan Har Das Tikku to high posts in the administration. In view of the outbreak of hostilities between Ranjit Singh and his brother Fateh Khan,

1 Khushwant, p. 241.

Azim stopped the payment of rupees nine lacs instalment. Another reason for doing so was the capture of the Attock fort by Ranjit from his brother. Ranjit Singh, therefore, made it a pretext for the invasion of Kashmir in 1813—1814. A force of thirty thousand men supported by 150 guns was despatched under the over-all command of Kharak Singh. A galaxy of generals, Hari Singh Nalva, Meeth Singh Bharania, Jodh Singh Kalsia, Ram Dyal, the grand son of Mohkam Chand and the Muslim Artillery Commander Mian Ghausa commanded different regiments. They moved through Sadu to Hirpur. Another force of thirty thousand men with a large number of guns under the personal command of the Maharaja made for Poonch. The pincer movement began in the second week of July. Before entering Poonch, the artillery boomed in the hills for many days spreading fire day and night in order to frighten its inhabitants with the result that people abandoned their homes, burnt their standing crops and removed their live-stock and chattel to higher altitudes or places far away from regular routes.

Upto Rajouri there was practically no resistance. Its ancient name was Rajpori. In 633 A.D. when it was visited by the famous Chinese traveller Hsuan Tsang, it was a part of the Kashmir kingdom. In the 15th century it came under Muslim rule. Aghar Khan, who ruled the principality at the time of the second Sikh invasion, had succeeded his father Karimullah in 1808. He was from a Hindu wife and it may have been one of the reasons why both the people as well as the army favoured the succession of his younger brother Rahimullah who, however, withdrew in favour of his elder brother. Aghar Khan welcomed Ranjit and was appointed officer incharge of the march in view of his minute knowledge of the long mountainous area through which the army had to pass on its way to Srinagar. When the combined forces reached Behramgala, a small Afghan force, finding itself outnumbered, entrenched itself in the fort. Ranjit laid a siege and within a few days the besiegers had to abandon the fort as it was impossible for them to face the heavy guns of the Sikh army. The Sikh army thence moved to Mandi. From here, a considerable force under Ram Dyal was sent ahead to engage the enemy. It seems to have been supposed that not much resistance lay ahead. The opposing armies clashed at Hirpur. A fierce battle ensued between the Sikh army under Ram Dyal and the Afghan and Kashmiri forces under the command of Baba Khan. The battle was still ferociously raging when a wave of torrential rain bathed the warring foes and inundated the battle-field. The Sikh army lost heart and was defeated. Three of its high officers were killed. Another force under the command of Sardar Jeewan Mal, an employee of Prince Kharak Singh, was immediately rushed to reinforce Ram Dyal. In another encounter on the Pir Panjal heights, Jeewan Mal and a large number of Sikh soldiers were killed. It is admitted that the Afghan and Kashmiri forces

put up a valiant resistance and fought hard to frustrate the Sikh invasion.[1] A considerable part of the Sikh army was still in tact but disagreeing with some of his courtiers who suggested that he should himself march ahead, Ranjit Singh sent a message to Azim Khan that if he was agreeable to the lifting of the siege of the Sikh troops whom he had surrounded and allow them to return to the Maharaja's camp, he was prepared to recall the invasion and return to Lahore.[2] Azim Khan accepted the offer, withdrew the siege and permitted the Sikh soldiers to return to the Maharaja's camp unmolested. According to Khushwant Singh, Azim Khan and Ram Dyal eventually exchanged gifts as a token of peace.[3] According to Hashmatullah, 3,000 Sikh soldiers were killed in the battle at Hirpur.

The rains also brought in cholera, which took a heavy toll of the Sikh forces, including Mian Ghausa, who died on his way to Lahore. The Maharaja was confronted with an acute supply problem. Guerilla bands from Poonch which operated in the rear also dampened the morale of the invaders. It is admitted by Sikh historians that the Maharaja did not fare any better and that the Afghans wrested the offensive from the Sikh army and "pushed the Maharaja out of the hills".[4] It is true that there was heavy rain but it is too naive to make it a peg for the failure of the invasion. After all, it couldn't have discriminated between the two opposing forces. The absurdity of the argument would be clear from the fact that Kashmir valley receives comparatively much less rain than the Punjab because its surrounding mountains prevent the bulk of monsoon winds from entering the Valley. It is, however, true that the invader's guns which gave him marked superiority over the defenders, lost much of their fury in the midst of the action because the rain may have washed away a part of the gun-powder and at the same time made it difficult, if not impossible, to feed these guns without some water getting mixed therewith, thus reducing its effectiveness.

The news of Ranjit's defeat in Kashmir and his failure to capture the territory despite his military superiority, appears to have spread like a wild-fire throughout north India and considerably damaged his image. Ochterlony who has been already noticed as representing the Governor-General at the marriage of Prince Kharak Singh, sent a letter, offering British military assistance in a new invasion. Naturally, piqued by the offer and still confident of his ability to achieve the objective with his own resources, Ranjit thankfully declined the same.[5]

The defeat of his choicest troops in quick succession, despite their superiority in numbers and guns, especially for the first time, must have

1 & 2 Kanayah Lal, p. 242.
3 Khushwant, p. 247.
4 *ibid.*, p. 239.
5 Sohan Lal, p. 242.

shocked but could not deter Ranjit Singh from pursuing his cherished goal. His standing army was second only to the British; it had both the training of a regular army as well as the experience of many a hard-fought battle. He was himself a man of resolute will, possessing stirring qualities of leadership, that alone kept the turbulent mass of low-paid Khalsa army devoutly loyal to his person and magnetically drawn to the altar of sacrifice in the battle-field even when the object was the acquisition of a horse. One important lesson Ranjit Singh learnt from the failure of Kashmir invasion was the inaptitude of soldiers drawn from plains to wage a war at high altitudes. Therefore, while preparations were already afoot for a third invasion and Dina Nath, a Kashmiri pandit who was later conferred the title of Diwan and became principal minister of the Regime in later days of its decay, and who was then Revenue and Finance Minister, was entrusted, alongwith Ganga Ram, another Kashmiri pandit, with the task of army administration and the purchase of stores and equipment.[1] The next step was the occupation of the Hill states of Nurpur, Jaswan and Kangra not with the purpose of completing the encirclement of the State as Khushwant Singh claims because it did not provide the Afghans any outlet either for support from or exit to Afghanistan, but it appears that the reason for their occupation, apart from the lust for conquest, was the need of an army-recruiting base in a hilly area so as to raise a force composed of highlanders for use in Kashmir. It was a coincidence that by about the same time Nepal was over-run by the British and large numbers of Gurkhas scanned through the sub-continent for employment. Thousands made almost straight for the Punjab of Ranjit's fame; he lost no time in raising a sizable force from amongst them with the immediate object of using them in his prospective invasion of Kashmir.

Azim Khan had appointed Pandit Birbal Dhar, Mirza Pandit Dhar and Sukha Ram Safaya to responsible administrative posts. Collection of the State revenue had been entrusted to Pandit Birbal Dhar. In 1819, Pandit Birbal claimed that the revenue receipts had fallen by a lac of rupees while Azim Khan suspected that the amount may have been realized but embezzled by the Pandit. He, therefore, put him under house-arrest until the settlement of accounts but when Mirza Pandit, a relative of Birbal, stood surety for him and gave a written undertaking that he would not escape the country, Birbal was restored to his liberty. According to Bamzai, Mirza Pandit then sent for Birbal and told him that if he had actually made up his mind to go to Punjab and induce Ranjit Singh to conquer Kashmir, he was free to go and need not worry for the consequences. Birbal thereupon escaped in the darkness of the night

1 Khushwant, p. 248.

towards Punjab alongwith his son Raj Kak; a Muslim neighbour, Qudus Gojawari, secreted his wife and daughter-in-law in his house. He went straight to Jammu and had a meeting with Raja Gulab Singh, who apart from providing him with necessary means of travel, also gave a letter of introduction to his brother Dhian Singh.

Gulab Singh and his family had their own plans. Although there is no evidence that there was any secret understanding between Gulab Singh and the Pandit group in power in Srinagar, the flight of Birbal direct to Jammu instead of to Rajouri, Poonch or Bhimber which were nearer than Jammu and in the direct possession and administration of Ranjit Singh, are important circumstances which raise a suspicion that after all there may have already existed some sort of liaison between them. It at least shows that the latter was under the impression that Gulab Singh was interested in the termination of Muslim rule in the Valley.

When Azim Khan learnt of his escape, he sent for the surety, Mirza Pandit. The conversation that took place between them has been recorded by Mr. Bamzai in the following words:—

"Where has Birbal gone?
Should he care no more for the world, he will go to the Ganges; otherwise he will go to Ranjit and bring Sikhs against you.
What to do then? asked Azim Khan.
Put Mirza Pandit to death, replied Mirza Pandit.
What about the outstandings against Birbal, asked Azim Khan.
To be put against the name of Mirza Pandit, replied the Pandit."[1]

Azim Khan was pleased with his answers and a brave man himself, he acted with grace and magnanimity and not only took no action against the Pandit but also continued to keep him in power.

In 1819 when these events were taking place, Fateh Mohammad, being in need of support summoned his brother Azim Khan who naturally hastened to the call of duty, also taking with him the major portion of his forces, having already, in anticipation, sent away his family. He put his younger brother Jabbar Khan incharge of Kashmir, with the remainder of the troops—admittedly small numbers,[2] to maintain the arrangement till he hoped to return back. At the same time, the Dogra party at the Court was now sufficiently powerful, Dhian Singh having been already appointed gate-keeper of the 'Harem', which gave him the opportunity of being constantly

1 Bamzai, p. 420.
2 Khushwant Singh, p. 254.

near the ears of Ranjit. Says a Kashmiri proverb:

کہنہ مہتہ دتم - کسنس تل قتم

"Don't give me anything but please allow me access to your ears."

The arrival of Birbal, who may be presumed, not to have been idling in the interval, had also strengthened the hands of Pandits, Dina Nath and Ganga Ram. It can also be safely assumed that they maintained regular contact with their relations in Srinagar and kept Ranjit informed of important developments. On receiving news that Azim Khan, a prestigious soldier whose victory over the Sikhs only five years back may have operated as a psychological hesitation, was away in Kabul, engaged in a fratricidal war and had left a small force behind, the Maharaja naturally thought that the opportune moment to avenge his defeat and realise his long cherished desire to annex the beautiful Valley to his Kingdom, had, at long last, presented itself.

SIKHS CONQUER KASHMIR

According to Mr. Bamzai,[1] when it became known at Lahore that Azim Khan had left for Kabul where his brother Wazir Fateh Mohammad Khan had been blinded by the order of Kamran on the allegation that his younger brother Dost Mohammad had outraged the modesty of the daughter of Mahmud Shah, Birbal, in order to persuade Ranjit Singh to invade Kashmir, undertook to make good any financial loss resulting from a failure of an invasion and to make the appeal powerful, offered his son Raj Kak as a hostage for the security of the performance of the engagement. It seems that the story is largely untrue and has been deliberately invented to claim that the move for the termination of Muslim rule originated with Pandits. It was largely aimed at Dogras to bring home their identity of interests and thereby attract the ruling family's undue support to their administrative supremacy.

In any case, the very claim that Birbal should have volunteered to keep his son Raj Kak as a security for meeting the cost of the invasion, clearly shows that the Pandit was a very rich man, because the cost of such an expedition could not be less than lacs of rupees. This also shows that he had taken undue advantage of his position as Afghan Revenue Collector for many years and amassed a huge fortune partly at the cost of his employers but largely by fleecing his poor compatriots. The short-fall in the revenue amounted to rupees one lac only and certainly it was not a sufficient amount to meet the expenditure of such a huge army as was expected to be sent for the conquest of Kashmir.

After completing preparations for his third invasion, Ranjit Singh released Sultan Khan of Bhimber from jail and offered him a

1 Bamzai, p. 422.

small jagir on the condition of his acting as a helper and guide for the Sikh army in the area. It is unfortunate that a chieftain who had, only seven years back, rallied considerable support and given a resolute battle to the Sikhs which had made him a hero in the area, should have been so demoralised by seven years captivity as to have readily agreed to act as his collaborator. He took oath on the Kalima to support the invasion and faithfully adhered to his commitment. Ranjit then asked Birbal to contact the jagirdars, muqaddams and other willing collaborators who prided to be called Rais and to secure from them written or verbal pledges of support. It is claimed that a good number of them fell into the trap. Aghar Khan of Rajouri gave a written undertaking in saffron-ink. Ranjit Singh appears to have been particularly keen to secure the support of the local chieftains from Bhimber upto Shopian, to ensure that the army got a free and peaceful passage and that the rear was safe whilst it advanced. The release of Sultan Khan and the pledge by Aghar Khan had the same objective in view. Letters or messages were then sent to all Sardars and subordinate chieftains in the Punjab to reach Lahore alongwith detachments of their troops.

The advance column left Lahore on 26th February 1819 under the command of Prince Kharak Singh while Ranjit Singh started personally on the 19th of April 1819, and set up his base camp at Wazirabad. The army was divided into three columns. The main column was to stay at the base camp with the Maharaja himself in command. The other two columns, one under Misr Diwan Chand and the other under Prince Kharak Singh were despatched through Rajouri. The troops were also accompanied by the most outstanding Sikh Generals, Hari Singh Nalva, Jawala Singh Padania, Makhma Singh Chimini, Gulab Singh and the notorious robber-turned soldier, Phulla Singh Nihang. Kharak Singh went via Jammu while Misr Diwan Chand moved through Bhimber. From Rajouri Diwan Misr informed Ranjit that Aghar Khan had rendered valuable assistance; that the cavalry had reached Rajouri but as the arrival of the infantry was still awaited, it was not considered expedient to resume the advance. Ranjit Singh thereupon personally moved to Bhimber. Meanwhile, the Sikh soldiers in Rajouri indulged in loot, arson, abduction and molestation of women. On Sikh commander's failure to take action or call it to a halt, Aghar Khan, partly out of anger against the outrages and partly because of inability to face his people, escaped into jungles and began harassing isolated bands of Sikh soldiers.

Poonch which was known as "Parnotsa" at the time of the visit of Hsuan Tsang and was under the suzerainty of Kashmir, was then ruled by Ruh-ullah Khan whose son had been detained by the Afghans as a hostage. He, therefore, expressed his inability to support Ranjit. He was expelled and the territory occupied by the Sikhs. Though the

Muslims of Kashmir valley had no particular reason to be pleased with the Afghan rule which had dealt with them as harshly as with the local Hindus except for the continued religious freedom they enjoyed, they made a common cause with the Afghans to prevent the passage of their territory into Sikh hands. It was quite natural as success of the Sikh invasion would have meant, as it actually came to mean, the end of centuries-old Muslim rule and the imposition of Hindu rule, bringing in its train, miseries, indignities, as well as economic, political and religious persecution.

When the army reached Poonch and would have been without a guide in those strategically dangerous areas, Sultan Khan, as well as Faiz Talab and Rahimullah, brothers of Aghar Khan, were at hand for timely help and it was on account of their minute knowledge of the area that Poonch and Rajouri were easily crossed. Since leaving Wazirabad the two columns rejoined at Thana in Poonch. From here one column went through Dhral and the other via Poshiana.

Intelligence had already reached Jabbar Khan of the impending Sikh invasion. He had collected his army and marched to Hirpur, a place about five and a half miles from Shopian, on way towards Pir Panjal. Among the leaders of the Afghan army were Wali Mohammad Khan, Abdullah Khan and Abdul Rahman. The Sikhs had, from the very beginning, an edge over their opponents both on account of their guns as well as their numbers. It may be recalled that in the very beginning of his career, Ranjit Singh was very much impressed by the repeated success achieved by the Company troops in different battles and on one occasion he visited them incognito to satisfy his curiosity. He ultimately learnt both through his own experience as well as the advice tendered by his advisers that it was the discipline and the artillery that had made the Company troops almost invincible. He, theretore, entrusted the raising and training of his infantry to two European officers, Generals Allard and Ventura. In 1838,[1] the infantry had a strength of 29,617. His artillery was also organised by two European officers, Claude Auguste Court and Alexander Gardener. He set up many gun-manufacturing factories. In 1838 the artillery had a strength of 4,535 with 188 heavy guns and 280 swivels. The number of his European officers was between 20 to 42. Among them were Robert Dick, son of Major-General Sir Robert Dick and Jackie Thomas, son of an adventurer George Thomas who had proclaimed himself Nawab not far away from Lahore; both were Britishers. Claude was a French. There was also one Col. Henry Court, a French and Paolo De Avitabile, an Italian. The strength of his cavalry was in no case less than twenty thousand.

1 Faqir Waheedudin p. 124.

According to Mr. Faqir, it was an unequal contest between the Afghan horses on the one hand and the Sikh guns on the other. In the fighting that raged for a few hours, Jabbar Khan received a severe gun wound on his left arm and retreated in pain towards Srinagar. This caused panic in the Afghan and Kashmiri army which lost the field. The Sikh army which is estimated at thirty thousand entered Srinagar on the 4th of July, 1819;[1] the battle at Hirpur having taken place on 3rd July. Troops were despatched to different parts to overcome the resistance put up by the local people.

Ranjit Singh was so pleased with the conquest that the victory was celebrated with great pomp and show; Lahore was illuminated for three days and robes of honour as well as cash rewards were given to Pandit Raj Kak Dhar and other nobles. Among the Sardars who were the recipients of special favours was Phullah Singh, who had particularly distinguished himself in the battle. Raja Sultan Khan was awarded the jagir of Rajawar. Pandit Birbal Dhar became the principal Adviser and Revenue Collector of the new regime. A son born to Ranjit's wife Daya Kaur, a widow of the Bhangi chief of Gujrat, soon after the conquest, was, in celebration of the victory, named Kashmira Singh!

English newspaper-reading public appears to have been well-posted with uptodate information of the happenings in north India, so much so, that two years *before* the Sikh conquest of Kashmir, Moore had pathetically predicted enslavement of Kashmiri Muslims by Hindus for generations to come and portrayed their anxious looks towards the territories now constituting Pakistan for support. Prophetically, the poet lamented:

> "Blest Allah! who shall save her now,
> There is not in all that warrior-band,
> One Arab sword, one turbaned-brow,
> From her own faithful Muslim Land.

Continued Muslim Resistance

Although Sikhs were able, to a large extent, to subdue Muslims of Kashmir valley, they did not succeed in fully subjugating the people living in hilly areas, particularly those in Poonch and Muzaffarabad. Soon after the capture of Srinagar, they marched upon Muzaffarabad. Among other tribes inhabiting the district, the most important were the Rajput tribes known as 'Khakha' and 'Bambah'. The Khakhas have been very unpopular in Kashmir valley, perhaps for their old but predatory

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1 Khushwant Singh, 254.

habits. Children used to be frightened by being told that Khakhas were coming. A fierce battle was fought near Uri in which the Muslims were defeated. Among the prisoners taken were Sardar Ghulam Ali Khan, the Khakha Chief and Raja Sarfaraz Khan, the Raja of Uri. Sometime later Sardar Ghulam Ali Khan was butchered to death by Hari Singh Nalva in Shergarhi while the Raja of Uri was sent to Lahore where he remained interned for several years.

....MUZAFFARABAD

In 1827, Zabardast Khan, who had succeeded his father Hassan Ali Khan as the Sultan of Muzaffarabad, collected a sizable force and declared his independence. He was still preparing for an invasion of Kashmir valley when Diwan Kripa Ram, came down with a large Khalsa army to suppress the revolt. Between Baramula and Muzaffarabad, a distance of nearly 77 miles, stand huge mountains on both sides of the route. The forces of Raja Zabardast Khan as well as the Muslims inhabiting the route hid themselves in caves, behind huge rocks and amidst forests and are claimed to have harassed the advancing Khalsa army which lost a number of soldiers and porters. Unluckily for the Raja, Ganesh Pandit, the brother of Birbal, who is alleged by Hindu historians to have been instrumental in the downfall of his own brother and was accompanying the Diwan as his Adviser, was able to sow seeds of discord amongst his confederates through lavish promises, with the result that most of them withdrew their support, leaving Zabardast Khan alone in the field. He had, therefore, no way out but to offer, as a temporary measure, his allegiance to the Sikh Durbar. The Diwan took some hostages and returned to Srinagar.

Soon after the return of Diwan, Zabardast Khan was contacted by Syed Ahmad Shaheed, who had raised an army of selfless disciples known as "Ghazis" with the avowed purpose of re-establishing the political power of Muslims. A pious man, he succeeded in attracting not only a wide following but also the sympathies of the entire Muslim north India. The volunteers were drawn even from places as far away as Bengal and Bihar. After a few years fighting in Peshawar and the adjoining tribal area, Syed Ahmad Shaheed moved to Balakot, which is hardly at a distance of thirty miles from Muzaffarabad town, and only twenty four miles from the border between Muzaffarabad and Hazara. The distance by way of direct hilly routes is not more than twelve miles.

According to information furnished by descendants of Zabardast Khan, now living in Muzaffarabad, the initiative for collaboration had come from the Syed himself, who sent his emissaries frequently. Given below

is the translation of a letter in Persian sent by Syed Ahmad to Zabardast Khan:

"In the Name of Allah, the Most Beneficent, the Most Merciful.

From Ameer-ul-Momineen to Sultan Zabardast Khan, Sultan Najaf Khan of Kahori and Sultan Ahmad Khan and their eminent companions.

After wishing you well, you are hereby informed that we are thankful to God who has opened for us the gates of victory, in that, when this servant of God left Amb to capture Peshawar and settle the country of Samah and left behind Maulana Mohammad Ismail with a small number of men to guard Amb, Hari Singh, the Kafir and........in collaboration with the hypocrite from Tanoli attacked Amb and the forts in Chitarbai with his full force and artillery but with the grace of God, the soldiers of God suffered no loss at all while a large number of the Kafirs were killed; they had to run away from these areas with shame and when I was myself busy in settling the territory of Samah, all the Durrani Sardars unleashed a war against us with their full force and artillery. Consequently, a battle took place between the Mujahids and the hypocrites between villages Toroo and Hoti. For........days the battle raged and ultimately with the help of God, the Mujahids overcame the hypocrites. They had to run away despite their large numbers; a large number of them and their horses were killed. Most of their Sardars have been killed. 20 Mujahids gained martyrdom and almost the same number was wounded; our Sardars such as Maulana Sahib and Arbab Behram Khan and others are quite safe. I have myself directed Mir Ismail, an example of devotion and loyalty, to remain there. Insha-Allah, with the grace of God, I shall be keeping you informed of future developments. You can hear the details from the messenger carrying this letter. Dated the 7th Rabi-ul-Awwal, 1239 Hijri. Ahmad."

It appears that some people from Muzaffarabad as well as Kashmir valley had established contact with Syed Ahmad Shaheed. A number of people pledged their support to Maulana Nizam-ud-Din Chishti, his Khalifa (Representative) in Kashmir. A batch of 300 soldiers under the joint command of Maulvi Qutbud Din Langarhari (Muzaffarabad), Mansoor Khan Kandahari and Munshi Aman Zai was despatched to Muzaffarabad. They were followed by another batch of 10 soldiers under the command of Maulvi Khair-ud-Din Sherkoti. It appears that they fought side by side with Zabardast Khan. Enquiries made from the area have revealed that the actual name of Sultan Ahmad Khan was Sultan Sher Ahmad Khan. The original letter

has been preserved in the National Museum Karachi under exhibit No. N. M. 1967/349.

Consequently Zabardast Khan attacked Sikh garrisons in Baramula, Handwara and certain parts of Hazara adjoining Muzaffarabad. Ranjit Singh got so panicky that he marched personally at the head of a huge army. He established his base camp at Hassanabdal, about twenty eight miles from Rawalpindi on way to Abbottabad. Hassanabdal carries great sanctity in Sikh religion as one of its most important shrines is situated there. A rock bears the marks of a human hand which Sikhs believe, on the strength of a tradition, to be those of Baba Guru Nanak, the founder of their religion. Ranjit Singh deputed a large force under the command of his son Kharak Singh, who, of course, held only the nominal command, while some of his best generals were in defacto command. Several clashes took place but despite their numerical superiority and artillery assistance, the campaign proved a failure as the Sikhs were not able to inflict any decisive defeat on the Muslim forces. Ranjit Singh, therefore, returned to Lahore disappointed. The Maharaja and his advisers ultimately came to the conclusion that the best way to defeat Zabardast Khan or force him to submission was by creating dissension in his ranks. Consequently the Rajas, who had been earlier arrested during the governorship of Diwans Misr Chand and Kripa Ram and stood interned at Lahore, Sarfaraz Khan and Namdar Khan being among them, were won over and promised restoration of their jagirs. In their absence, their relatives had whole-heartedly supported Zabardast Khan. The Rajas came to Muzaffarabad and did their best to weaken Zabardast Khan but were not able to bring about any substantial change so long as Syed Ahmad Shaheed remained alive. After he was cornered by the forces of Prince Sher Singh and fell a victim to the treachery of some of his own men, it became difficult for Zabardast Khan to maintain his independence.

In 1837-38 during the governorship of Col. Mian Singh, Zabardast Khan again declared his independence and for a moment the entire district was lost to the Sikhs. He was assisted by Sultan Najaf Khan of Kahori. Advancing towards Baramula, they were able to liberate the area right upto the out-skirts of Uri where they were surprised by Col. Mian Singh. The Sikhs carried the day and Zabardast Khan lost his only son in the fighting. Col. Mian Singh took many hostages, including his grandson Rehmatullah, a young lad of exceptional personal beauty. It is said that the Colonel was so raptured by his personal charm that he arranged his marriage to Wakeelan, daughter of Moiz-ud-Din, the Raja of Karnah and herself gifted with great charm. During the governorship of Sheikh Ghulam Mohi-ud-Din, this lad who alongwith some other hill Chiefs had now been in prison for several years, unable to bear the

rigours of continued prison life of those days, died in the prime of his youth. His widow was later married by Sheikh Imam-ud-Din.

Ranjit Singh's death was followed by chaos and disorder in the Sikh kingdom. Afraid that Zabardast Khan may take advantage of the weakening of the Sikh hold, he was treacherously arrested while saying his prayers in the Sultani Masjid, Muzaffarabad town, and taken to Srinagar, where he was imprisoned in Hariparbat. It was a signal for revolt. Sultan Najaf Khan of Kahori, Sher Ahmad Khan of Karnah and Hussain Khan, the nephew of Zabardast Khan, joined hands and united all the local chieftains for a final and desperate battle. Their combined strength was able not only to liberate the entire district but also large parts of the district of Baramula. The Khalsa army tried to stop their advance towards Srinagar but were beaten back. When news of the reverses reached Lahore, Sheikh Imam-ud-Din and Sardar Hukam Singh Maloi were despatched with a large force. The Raja of Rajouri also sent a force of one thousand men under the command of his son Mirza Faqirullah Khan for the assistance of the Sikh army. Mirza Faqirullah, however, prevailed upon his Sikh colleagues to avoid confrontation and adopt a conciliatory attitude. The Sikhs, therefore, released Zabardast Khan on a surety of Rs. fifty thousand and prevailed upon him to persuade Hussain Khan and others to retire to Muzaffarabad. Unfortunately the Raja, now in his old age, was unable to appreciate the advantageous position of the Muslim army and the demoralisation that had afflicted the Sikh camp. His nephew Hussain Khan was, therefore, prevailed upon to withdraw his forces. Soon after his release, the Sikhs built a fort at Kahori and stationed a considerable force there.

In August 1842, Habibullah Khan, the ruling chief of Pakhli in Hazara, attacked the Kahori fort and besieged it; the Sikhs received substantial reinforcement from Sheikh Ghulam Mohi-ud-Din, The siege had to be withdrawn; Habibullah Khan was killed.

Sometime later, Raja Sultan Khan was able to persuade the Hill chieftains as well as the son of Habibullah Khan deceased to again join hands with him against the Sikhs. They attacked Kahori; a large force was sent from Srinagar under the command of Mirza Ayub Khan, the brother of Mirza Faqirullah Khan, with Pandit Raj Kak, the son of Pandit Birbal, as financial Adviser. The combined Sikh army was completely routed. According to Cunningham, a contemporary, who is generally credited as being sympathetic to Sikhs, the number of Sikh soldiers killed was about twelve thousand. It is most likely an overestimate. The geographic realities of the area, negative the deployment of a fighting force of such vast numbers. The victorious army then

marched towards Muzaffarabad. According to Hashmatullah, Sheikh Ghulam Mohi-ud-Din sent almost the entire army at his disposal for a final stand at Muzaffarabad. A desperate battle raged at the out-skirts of the town and ultimately the Sikh army was defeated but while retreating, set the town in flames. Baramula district was liberated; Muslim platoons in the Valley also rose in revolt and even the petty Muslim chieftains in the district placed themselves and their resources at the disposal of the advancing Muslim forces. The district was liberated in the month of November. In Handwara, Sher Ahmad Khan raised the banner of revolt. Nathe Shah and Sujan Singh, the local representatives of the Sikh regime, tried to put up resistance but were easily overcome and defeated. The Sikh representative at Bandipura, Pandit Tika Ram Bhan was arrested and sent to Karnah to be imprisoned there. Meanwhile, detailed information regarding the situation was received at Lahore. At the same time, Gulab Singh Bhurandia who was on way to Peshawar at the head of a large army was directed to divert his army towards Kashmir; assistance also came from Jammu and Poonch; the army from Poonch was commanded by Sheikh Imam-ud-Din. By the time these overwhelming forces, with their superior artillery, reached Srinagar, the Muslims had stormed the city, forcing the Governor to take refuge in the Hariparbat fort.

General Gulab Singh Bhurandia arrived in Hazara where he was joined by the forces of Dewan Mool Raj, the Sikh administrator of the district. Together they marched upon Muzaffarabad and recaptured it after a bloody battle. Many Muslim-inhabited villages were burnt to ashes; their property looted and thousands including women and children taken prisoners. The repression this time was most severe perhaps because they wanted to set an example for the future. The army then marched towards Srinagar where the Muslim confederates again lost and met the same treatment as had been meted out to their co-religionists at Muzaffarabad. However, Zabardast Khan was released and restored to his estate on the condition of his paying rupees fifty thousand of the bond earlier executed which, the Sikhs claimed, had been forfeited. To please him and win him over, the small chieftains of the district were placed under his overlordship. Mirza Faqirullah was sent to effect a formal handing over. Sometime later, Zabardast Khan died a natural death and was succeeded by his nephew Hussain Khan and soon afterwards, after the first Sikh war, Kashmir alongwith the district of Muzaffarabad, was purchased by Gulab Singh.

In view of the wide popular interest in the man, particularly in

Muzaffarabad, reproduced below are the impressions and observations of Baron Charles Hugel, the German traveller, who on his way back from Srinagar, during the governorship of Col. Mian Singh, had several meetings with Zabardast Khan:

> "I have rarely seen handsomer features; the nose slightly arched, the curved brows, and the lofty forehead, all harmonized with the look of gravity, and with the grey beard which covered the lower part of his careworn face......Sad as were his bodily ailments, those of his mind were even more pitiable. He had lost his only son long before, and the last relative now left, a youth, was detained as a hostage in Kashmir. The poor old grand-father's sole wish was to see and embrace this lad once more; but all his entreaties to Ranjit Singh to grant him this favour were in vain. I promised to add my petition to his own, and during my stay in Lahore to bring the matter before the Maharaja.
>
> As the little state possessed hereditarily by Sultan Zabardast Khan is situated on the high road between Kashmir and Kabul, it is an independent territory of some importance. The ferry over the Kishan Ganga used to bring him in a yearly sum of a lac of rupees; but since the decrease of traffic and the separation of Kashmir and Kabul, but especially since the population of this country has fallen off at least one-fifth, the number of passengers has of course diminished in the same proportion, and the whole revenue of the country is estimated little more than 30,000 rupees, from which we must deduct 6000, the tribute to Kashmir, and at this time Mehan Singh contemplates exacting double this sum."[1]

Raja Zabardast Khan was the symbol of Muslim resistance against their country's occupation by Sikhs. He spent his last years boldly defying the Sikh authority and at such a stage of life when people prefer solitude, comfort and ease, he sacrificed his personal comfort and took to a life which was very demanding. That apart from Peshawar, Muzaffarabad was the only place in the entire Kingdom where Sikhs could not firmly establish their rule and where they remained engaged in constant war-fare throughout their occupation, is by itself a fitting tribute to the memory of the warrior.

GALWANS

In the Valley itself, the main resistance, encountered in its northern part, was led by Khaira Galwan. A war-like tribe, Galwans were the descendants of the Chak rulers who put up brave resistance when Akbar invaded Kashmir. The tribe was hunted down by the Mughals in order to wipe out the possibility of a revolt.

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1 Hugel, p. 185.

It is natural, under these circumstances, that most of them should have fled from the towns and taken refuge in dense forests which must have been plenty at the time. Some are even reported to have crossed the Rajdiangan pass and settled in Northern areas. With the passage of time, they took to horse trade both for livelihood as well as a means of protection because the ready availability of horses made it possible to make swift movements if and when there was any danger of detection. They were mainly concentrated in Trehgam in Baramula district, Awantipura, Shopian, Bandipura and certain areas of the Sind valley. It is, however, true that over the years, some of them had fallen prey to robbery and way-laid travellers; sometimes they even lifted brides from marriage processions and resorted to killings and torture to achieve their ends. They had terrorised the people so much that even the generation of my parents spoke ill of them, having inherited the opinions from their elders who had personal knowledge of their misdoings.

The Sikhs had a very difficult time with them. Being numerically far inferior to the Sikh army and without the resources that the latter commanded, it was natural that the tribe was not in a position to give a conventional battle and instead had to engage them in small surprise attacks at various out-posts. Being in an advantageous position on account of their knowledge of the land, they were able to inflict heavy losses on the Sikh soldiery. Their success emboldened them to set up secret camps in the vicinity of Srinagar. Abul Fazal has recorded that their old palace was at Trehgam in Kamraj. Vigne who visited Kashmir in late thirties saw its massive ruins. They rarely intermarried with any other caste and resided in forests, changing their place of abode whenever the chances of detection rendered it necessary to be on the move. A heavy club, with iron rings around it, was their principal weapon. Kripa Ram put 2 to 3 of them to death but it was Sher Singh who adopted stringent measures to suppress them. According to Vigne, it was one of the few measures that Sher Singh "could claim any credit for during his tyrannical viceroyalty in Kashmir." One day on receiving information that some of them had assembled near the plain of Damudur, a few miles from Srinagar, a large force was sent after them. Seven or eight of the Galwans were killed on the spot while seventeen were hanged on the Amira-Kadal bridge. Col. Mihan Singh also killed and hanged several of them. However curious though it may seem, the truth remains that despite their predatory habits, large sections of Muslims felt sympathetically drawn towards them perhaps because they were the only people outside the Hill-tribes who engaged Kashmir's new rulers to some of the bloodiest encounters within the Valley. G.T. Vigne who witnessed some of their hangings, has recorded about them:

"They were men of great personal strength, and one of them, who was made prisoner and confined in the fort by order of Mihan Singh, contrived to make his escape, by dropping himself from the wall with his irons on; but being unable to release himself from them, he was again found and made a resistance so desperate that they were obliged to put him to death."[1]

......POONCH

About the year 1832, Gulab Singh, who had already acquired the Chakla of Jammu as Jagir from Maharaja Ranjit Singh, made many attempts at the conquest of the district of Poonch, which was inhabited by martial tribes like the 'Sudhans', 'Maldayals' and others. Gulab Singh prevailed upon Ranjit Singh, mainly through the influence of his brothers Dhian Singh and Suchet Singh, to attack Poonch. Consequently, Ranjit Singh marched at the head of a force as large as sixty thousand equipped with a hundred and fifty pieces of ordnances which boomed day and night in the hills surrounding the territory. Instead of putting up a fight, the local leadership thought it advisable to make peace and accept the Maharaja's sovereignty in order to save their territory from the destruction that such a huge army with its artillery could have inflicted. Shamas Khan, the outstanding local leader, was taken a hostage and entrusted to the care of Dhian Singh, whom he served as a cavalry man. In 1836, Shamas Khan returned to Poonch on leave and rejoined his tribe. Soon afterwards, in the Frontier, the Yusuf-Zais rose in revolt and Gulab Singh, who was in Multan on a campaign against one Diwan Sawan Mal, rushed to Peshawar in response to an order from Ranjit Singh. While he was in the Frontier, news reached Poonch that he had been mortally wounded; rumours also circulated that the Sikhs had been defeated. The result was that at certain places there were clashes between the Sikh forces and the local inhabitants in which the latter got an upper hand. When intelligence of these happenings reached Gulab Singh, he issued instructions to his Kardars for the arrest of Shamas Khan and his family but before it could be effected, the Rebel somehow got informed and knowing the fate that awaited him and his family, escaped into the fastness of the hills beyond the reach of the Raja's forces.

"This", according to Smyth, a contemporary, "was the signal for the hitherto smouldering flame of rebellion to break out. The whole country rose in arms against the authority of the Dogra Rajas and as they at first met with little opposition, the insurgents had in less than a month and before Goolaub could extricate himself from the

1 Vigne, p. 303.

Yuzoofzyes, taken and destroyed all the forts and strongholds of their rulers."[1]

Gulab Singh directed his son Ottam Singh, and Diwan Hari Chand to proceed to Poonch to suppress the revolt. They led a force of five thousand soldiers which was defeated though the prince was able to extricate himself and a part of his force with some difficulty. Gulab Singh then marched personally with a force of eight thousand regular infantry and twelve thousand irregulars raised in the hills about Jammu and encamped at Kahuta, a town in the Rawalpindi district about 20 miles from Azad Pattan and about 34 miles from Pallandari. As usual, Gulab did not trust the force of arm alone and spent several days in sowing seeds of dissension among the insurgents through bribes and lavish promises. As usual, Shamas Khan too had his enemies who having been won over by Gulab, were either neutralised or acted as his agents and informers. It was only then that Gulab Singh crossed Jhelum near Azad Pattan which he later named Lachhman Pattan and marched towards Mung and Pallandari. Says Smyth:

> "In order at once to strike terror into the insurgents and to distress and punish them, he devastated the country as he advanced, permitting his troops freely to plunder and to practise every excess. More than this, he offered a reward of five rupees for the head of every insurgent or any of those connected with him, man, woman or child; and in consequence a cool systematic massacre ensued, likely to lead to the utter extermination of the miserable people."[2]

It was natural that this display of ferocity should have struck panic and unable to resist the pillageous army which out-numbered the fighting strength of the Muslims, apart from being possessed of superior and extensive arms, the Muslims dispersed and fled to conceal themselves and their families among the rocks, mountains and forests, leaving their houses, cattle and property at the mercy of the invaders. The Dogra soldiers went in their pursuit and whenever a family was discovered, they were ruthlessly killed without regard to sex or age for the paltry sum of money fixed as reward on each head. It was after several days when hundreds of them may have been already cut to pieces and their severed heads presented to the heartless Dogra as trophies of war, to fulfil the promise of reward, that Gulab Singh issued an order that in future no female or child was to be killed but were to be taken into custody. May be, the principal reason that brought forth the stay order was the hourly growth of the reward-money. Henceforth, each army

1 Smyth, p. 222.
2 Smyth, p. 223.

division carried a train of females and children taken as captives. They were removed to Pallandari, where, according to Smyth, about five thousand were herded together in a small place. They were provided very little to eat. Whatever little possessions they had carried from their homes, were taken away by the soldiers. Hardly a few sacks of raw maize used to be thrown into their midst every day and one can imagine how a hungry mass of women must have fallen on the grain with the result that the weaker among them must have remained almost hungry. They were taken to a water tank only once in 24 hours to quench their thirst. It is not, therefore, surprising that about 1,500 are claimed to have died in the camp during their two-week halt at Pallandari. One can easily imagine the indignity to which these helpless creatures must have been subjected to by the soldiers. Obviously, a large number of Muslims were killed in the campaign.

Shamas Khan had so far evaded arrest. His enemies who had joined hands with Gulab Singh, betrayed his hiding place to the Dogras. He was surprised at night by Ottam Singh and instantly killed alongwith his nephew, Rajwali. Gulab Singh had offered a large reward for his head. Their heads were later exhibited in two iron cages at the top of the Adha Dek pass above Poonch where they remained for several years afterwards.

With the death of Shamas Khan and other rebel leaders, the resistance movement naturally collapsed and Gulab Singh withdrew some of his troops and retired to Jammu. On his orders, the females who had been camped at Pallandari were ordered to move to Jammu under strong military escort. It is estimated that about 700 died from want and fatigue in the way while thousands were carried away by soldiers as their share of the war booty. A hundred died in Jammu from ill-treatment and exposure and the remainder of the 8 to 9 hundred who were the only survivors to reach Jammu, were sold to the highest bidders. After the Dogras withdrew and people gradually came out of their hide-outs and returned to their homes, they found that everything had been carried away. The fields were lying uncultivated and the sowing season having already passed away, they were victims of a severe famine. Most of them had to abandon their homes once again and take shelter in the adjoining areas across the river, now parts of Pakistan, to work as labourers. Some of them sold their children in order to support themselves.

In course of his campaign in Poonch, one day the executioner hesitated and what followed is described by Vigne who himself saw the heads of Shamas Khan and his nephew grinning from iron cages over the pass at Adha Dek where they had been placed by Gulab Singh, "by way of affording", says Vigne, "a wholesome lesson to all travellers":

"The executioner hesitated, and Gulab Singh asked him if he were about to operate upon his father or mother, and rated him for being so chicken-hearted. He then ordered one or two of the skins to be stuffed with straw; the hands were stiffened, and tied in an attitude of supplication; the corpse was then placed erect; and the head, which had been severed from the body, was reversed as it rested on the neck. The figure was then planted on the way-side, that passer-by might see it; and Gulab Singh called his son's attention to it, and told him to take a lesson in the art of governing."[1]

According to the author of Tehrik-Azadi-e-Kashmir, himself a member of the Sudhan tribe, the Dogras and Sikhs launched a three-pronged attack on the rebel forces. The area upto Chirri Kot had been liberated before reinforcements from the Sikh Durbar arrived in Kotli via Mangla-Mirpur. The Muslims lost the encounter that took place in the vicinity of the town. Another clash took place at Pallandari and a third one at Pallangi. There were also clashes at Pachhiot and Paral; the Pallangi encounter took place after Muslim reverses at these two places. Another column captured Panthal, Baral, Narian and Chokian. The bloodiest clash took place at Mung, a few miles from Pallandari. The Muslims were overwhelmed and overpowered. According to the local folklore the following leaders were also flayed alive:

Sabz Ali Khan; Malli Khan; Asghar Ali Khan of Chhota Galla; Baz Khan of Hari; Baland Khan of Hari; Mir Baz Khan of Banjosa; Kaloo Khan of Hamrota; Fateh Sher Khan also of Hamrota; Mahndi Khan of Damni; Muzammil Khan of Pallangi; Sarandaz Khan of Pallangi; Hayat Khan of Jhandali; Jam Dad Khan of Reharra; and Amir Ali Khan of Sojal.[2]

However, Gulab Singh claimed that only three ring-leaders had been flayed alive and that too as a reprisal. Writing to Currie, Secretary to the Government of India in 1846 about the explanation given by Gulab Singh in a personal meeting as to why and how he had gained notoriety as of being a cruel tyrant, Lawrence wrote:

"During our interview, the Maharaja volunteered an explanation of the grounds on which he had obtained the character of a cruel tyrant, saying that in the Suodan country, the people had not only put his garrisons to the sword but cut up many of the soldiers piece-meal and thrown their corpses to the dogs, that in punishment for such atrocities and prevention of them for the future, he had flayed three ring-leaders. He then said that he would request for the services of

1 Vigne, p. 241.
2 Maulvi Mir Alam p. 97.

an advisor, after arriving in Kashmir by whose counsel he would abide his conduct."[1]

Two leading members of the tribe, Sardar Mohammad Latif Khan and Sardar Mohammad Mukhtar Khan Pleader, confirmed to this writer that the accusation was factually correct, but that it had been done as a reprisal for their crimes.

Smyth had no first hand knowledge of the happenings in Poonch. The figures given by him seem to be highly exaggerated. It is unfortunately the way of history to talk in terms of hundreds and thousands as a matter of routine. A controversy has been raging since some time as to whether Shamas Khan was a Sudhan or a Maldyal? The only folk-lore available on the subject speaks of him as a Maldyal. The forts mentioned in the folk-lore as having been captured by him are also located at Bagh and its surroundings. Again, Malli and Sabaz Ali, both Sudhans, are the only persons, mentioned in the folk-lore as having been skinned alive. Shamas Khan had no son and according to the folk-lore it seems it was Raj Wali, his nephew, who may have been killed along with him. The folk-lore places the number of his fighting men at 500. I think it is clear that Shamas Khan was not a Sudhan but a Maldyal and the claim to the contrary now advanced, fountains from intense tribalism that has unfortunately afflicted the district since some years.

Apart from establishing strong army garrisons at scores of places, important persons from each tribe were required to remain in Jammu idling for three to four months at their own expense for any likely government duty. Normally no duty was entrusted to them and the idea seems to have been to keep them as hostages at their own cost and use their presence away from their homes as a check against defiance of government by their people.

MIAN DEEDOO

Deedoo remains a household name in vast areas of Jammu province. Himself a Mian Rajput, he became a symbol of resistance against the Sikh occupation and the ruthlessness perpetrated by the Dogra brothers. Sometime after 1808, when Jammu was over-run by the Sikhs, hawks were frequenting a hill called Trikote, about 30 miles from Jammu city. Hawking has been a favourite amusement of the Sikh chiefs. Treated as State property, anyone capturing the bird was required to hand it over to the nearest office. It so happened that in 1811 Deedoo captured a remarkable hawk and refused to yield it, even though ordered to do so. A group of 13 soldiers was thereupon sent to secure

1 PGR Register 174-B p. 124.

the bird. It is said that when the soldiers came to his house and demanded the hawk, he offered to accompany them to Jammu along with the bird, and meanwhile invited them to a meal. While thus disarmed and busy preparing their meal, Deedoo sent away his wife with the bird, and sword in hand, fell upon them like a hawk. Only two soldiers survived to tell their woeful tale.[1] Deedoo could no longer remain in his home and took to predatory habits but the fact that he enjoyed general popular support shows that he did not victimise the general mass of people and was careful in the selection of his victims who were either the rulers or their collaborators. Several expeditions sent against him failed largely because people readily gave him shelter. On the other hand, the losses of the Sikh regime kept mounting apart from the loss of face involved. Khushal Singh, the Governor of Jammu, was dismissed and the territory carrying an annual income of rupees forty thousand, was conferred on Kasura Singh as a jagir.

Encouraged by his successful exploits and pampered by the general popular support, Deedoo now collected a band of about two thousand men and frustrated the efforts of the Durbar to consolidate its hold on the territory. There was a sharp fall in revenues because for fear of reprisals, tax officers dare not move into the countryside. In fact, the Sikh Government remained confined to Jammu city alone.

One Bhup Dev who belonged to the Reasi ruling family could not reconcile himself to the disinheritance of the family and subjugation of the territory by the Sikhs. It was only natural that his claim should have evoked popular sympathy. On the occupation of Reasi, when among other people, one Surta Laygial appeared with a nazar, as a customary token of submission, Gulab Singh refused to accept it telling him that he had been inciting people to trouble by propagating that Bhup Dev was their rightful jagirdar. Surta who felt insulted, retorted by manfully replying that Bhup Dev was their hereditary ruler whose ancestors had been obeyed by his family from generation to generation and that Gulab Singh had forcibly taken possession of his territory. It was too much to be stomached by a man like Gulab Singh who instantly beheaded him with a sword and cut his body into four pieces which were hanged on the nearby shisham trees.[2]

Emboldened by the support he was receiving from almost all quarters, Deedoo would now sometime enter Jammu city and after inflicting casualties on the Sikh soldiery, safely retire to his hide-outs. Ranjit was getting alarmed at his growing strength and sent several expeditions to capture him, dead or alive. Ram Singh and Diwan Bhawan Das Peshawari were

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1 Building of J & K State IV.
2 Hargopal Khasta, p. 476.

sent with a considerable force and on their failure, a bigger force was despatched with Nain Sukh Kamidan, Fateh Singh Man, Diwan Shankar Das Dogul, Dawandi Khan, Kripa Ram Chopra, Sardar Attar Singh, Mohr Singh, Narain Das, Diwan Kuba, Ghaseeta Mal Arora, Diwan Sahai and Lala Dana Mal commanding different sections. There were several encounters. Deedoo lost many faithful adherents who were either killed or captured but nevertheless he successfully frustrated their main objective, to have him—alive or dead. The Sardars and their collaborators then planned to achieve through treachery, what with a large force they had failed to achieve in battle. Deedoo was told on oath that Ranjit had agreed to pardon him and grant him a jagir if he appeared personally and promised to remain peaceful in future. He fell in but suspecting treachery, killed five of his captors and ran away. It was after this incident that he made a daring raid on Jammu city and after slaying some of the Sikh soldiers on duty, put the Mandi ablaze. He had terrified the two thousand Sikh garrison to such an extent that he would enter the city with fifty or sixty supporters, rob them of their valuables, and leave the city unmolested.[1] It is said that these raids were so frequent that there seldom was an interval of more than fifteen days. According to Smyth, the Sikhs never ventured to pursue him, a musket shot from the wall. It is also claimed that he himself killed at least three hundred Sikh soldiers. On more than one occasion, Deedoo has been known to have entered the city in the evening at the head of a two to three hundred men, the Sikhs offering no resistance. After killing all the Sikhs they came across, they would spend the night 'carousing round fires' which they had lit in the forum and on which they cooked their evening meals. At dawn they would leave the city unmolested.[2] Those very days, Pandit Birbal Dhar sent a few boxes of Kashmiri apple for Maharaja Ranjit Singh. At night, somewhere on way to Jammu, Deedoo replaced the apple with small pebbles. When the boxes were opened in the 'august' presence of the Maharaja, and it was correctly surmised as to who was responsible for the 'outrage', Ranjit's anger knew no bounds. He had been put to shame by one condemned as an outlaw. Gulab Singh was present in the Court and with great presence of mind told the Maharaja the following story: once upon a time a rat carried off a few whiskers of a lion but despite best efforts, the King of the jungle was unable to capture the insignificant insect; ultimately a cat reminded the lion that he was too big for a rat and begged, as a humble servant, to be entrusted with the job of visiting him with punishment. Gulab then added that Deedoo was too insignificant a person to attract the personal attention of a great King like Ranjit and that the duty of visiting him with punishment may graciously be entrusted to his care. Ranjit was naturally

1 Smyth, p. 269.
2 Guldasta-e-Kashmir by Khasta, p. 480.

delighted and as a token of appreciation, made him a gift of the Kashmiri shawl that he was wearing. Besides placing the services of Sardar Attar Singh Kalal and Jagat Singh Attariwala at his disposal, all the Sardars who had been earlier imprisoned in the Sheikhupura fort on the charge of aiding the out-law, were released. Gulab Singh brought them to Jammu and used them as spies and collaborators.

Bhup Dev had been deeply hurt by the brutal killing of Surta Laygial and had joined hands with Deedoo. They raided the jagir of Mian Mota. Gulab went in their pursuit with hundreds of soldiers and although they disappeared into forests, beyond the reach of the cavalry, they were soon afterwards surprised while hiding in the house of Sahib Rai Brahmin in Sarote. There was an exchange of fire for sometime but again, both were successful in evading their capture. When a force under Attar Singh surrounded his house in Chakti, Deedoo's ninety-year old father came out, sword in hand, and hatefully rejecting an offer of 'amaan' and declining, therefore, to surrender his sword, the old man retorted: "It is better for men to die of sword rather than be imprisoned by enemies and dishonoured". He was killed on the spot by Attar Singh. A force was then sent to Chadmai where Deedoo's family was residing. It appears that there was some fighting but Deedoo succeeded in retrieving his family. The last encounter fittingly took place on the same hill, Trikote. He was surrounded by a large force which included Gulab Singh, Zorawar Singh Kalhoria, Mian Shahna, Dharam Singh Raipuria, Jagat Singh Attariwala and Attar Singh Kalal who had earlier killed his father. He challenged Attar Singh and avenging the death of his father, cut him into two equal pieces but was at the same time himself done to death by several others.[1] His head was severed from the body and taken to Lahore by Gulab Singh and placed at the feet of Maharaja Ranjit Singh.[2] This happened in 1820. It was after this event that Ranjit Singh made all the three Dogra brothers, Gulab, Dhian and Suchet, Rajas of Jammu, Bhimber-Kassouli-Sambha and Ramnagar, carrying an annual income of rupees three, 1½ and 1 lac respectively.[3]

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1 Guldasta-e-Kashmir p. 480.
2 Smyth, p. 271.
3 The building of J&K State, IV.

CHAPTER INDEX

CHAPTER III

Subjugation of Kishtwar, Gilgit and Ladakh

..... KISHTWAR

In 1836 Zorawar Kalhuria made an attempt at the conquest of Bhadarwah, ruled since sometime by the Chamba Raja but had to retreat. Reasi was over-run by Gulab in 1817, and the administration entrusted to Zorawar. Kishtwar was founded by the ruling family of Gaur in Bengal in the 10th century. It was subject to Kashmir in the 11th century. Keerat Singh who ruled the territory during the reign of Aurangzeb, embraced Islam and was renamed as Saadatyar Khan. Sometime later a princess was sent for the harem of prince Mohammad Shah. In 1820 when Gulab annexed the territory, it was ruled by Mohammad Teg Singh Saifullah Khan Bahadur.[1]

Shah Shujah, after having escaped from Lahore, had taken refuge in Kishtwar. He was warmly received and rendered valuable assistance in his futile invasion of Kashmir which was then under the Afghan Governor, Mohammad Azim Khan. While Shah Shujah escaped to Ludhiana via Suru, Zanskar and Simla, Ranjit Singh felt aggrieved against Mohammad Tegh for having given him shelter. It was in this background that Gulab Singh, who was already in charge of Jammu Chakla and had been on the look out of an opportunity for the annexation of the parganah, succeeded in getting the permission of the Maharaja to annex Reasi and Kishtwar.

As usual, Gulab Singh resorted to intrigues and deception. It is recorded in "Gulab Nama", that he wrote a letter to Wazir Lakhpat, the Prime Minister of the Raja of Kishtwar informing him that his letter had been received; that he should continue to serve the interests of the

1 Hashmatullah, p. 168 to 170.

Jammu Raja and assured him that he would be duly rewarded. Wazir Lakhpat, the Gulab Nama says, had never addressed any letter to Gulab Singh nor had there been any contact, whatsoever, between them. It was so arranged that this letter "fell" into the hands of the personal enemies of Lakhpat, who promptly handed it over to Mohammad Tegh. Without making any inquiry, he at once believed its contents and conspired with his advisers Ahmed Shah and Hakim Jameel Shah to bring about his assassination. A freshly recruited Rohilla, engaged for this purpose, assaulted the Wazir in the presence of the Raja but the latter pitifully intervened to save him from being killed outright while the Pathan was instantly done to death to ensure that he didn't open his mouth.[1] After recovery, Lakhpat first went to Chamba and thence to Jammu where he took service under Gulab Singh, who then sent a message to Mohammad Tegh that being unable to withstand an invasion, he should reach Jammu so that Gulab could intercede with the Maharaja on his behalf and promised to get him confirmed in his post. It seems that simultaneously Gulab marched with his troops and crossed Khalni. Even otherwise unable to collect a sizable force to meet the invader, Mohammad Tegh voluntarily presented himself before Gulab Singh who put him under arrest and after taking control of the district, appointed one Mian Chain Singh as Administrator. On his return to Jammu, Gulab Singh took both Mohammad Tegh as well as his sons Zorawar and Jaimal to Lahore where they were interned by the Sikh government. It seems that they were subsequently released but required to remain at Lahore. After sometime, Ranjit Singh became a bit friendly with Mohammad Tegh who seems to have been permitted to appear in the court. This earned for him bitter enmity of the Dogra brothers, who on account of their unlimited influence in the Court, subjected him to such indignities that Mohammad Tegh almost lost his balance of mind, got his own grave prepared and after the fashion of Roman nobility in the hey day of Rome, himself opened both the principal veins of his arms and with blood gushing forth, ordered a water-carrier in attendance to wrap his body in a dry skin used for carrying water and deposit the corpse in the grave.[2] According to Vigne, relations between Ranjit and Tegh improved and Ranjit promised to restore his 'gadi' but Gulab Singh got him poisoned on the occasion of Holi through a servant who was paid rupees ten thousand.[3]

Zorawar was converted to christianity and lived mostly at Ludhiana. Jaimal became an ascetic and after sometime returned to Kishtwar to organise a revolt but was identified and arrested in Dodah, whose Administrator, Sarbdayal sent him to Jammu to be detained there.

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1 Hashmatullah, p. 185.
2 Hashmatullah, p. 187.
3 Vigne, p. 182.

A man of Gulab Singh's cruel bent of mind could not be content with his imprisonment; he was, therefore, tied with a cot and entrusted to the fury of the fast going waves of Chenab near Akhnoor. Somehow saved, he was re-arrested and placed in Jammu prison from where he was released on the intervention of the Company Sarkar, who had, in their turn, been moved by the Christian fraternity of Zorawar. At the time of Gulab Singh's invasion, Dilawar, the third son of Mohammad Tegh, was somehow able to escape to Kashmir from where he was brought by his supporters to Seraj in Kishtwar, where, after collecting a small force, he declared his independence. In the absence of Gulab Singh who was then in Lahore, Wazir Lakhpat brought reinforcements from Jammu and defeated him. A number of his followers lost their lives. Dilawar fled to Kangra where a small jagir was granted to him by the Company Government. Among other relatives of Mohammad Tegh Singh, who were removed to Jammu were Fateh Singh and Jangi Singh, who also tried to raise the banner of revolt. Being unsuccessful, they remained imprisoned in Bahu fort for eighteen years and were then granted small jagirs in Chomakh, Mirpur.

Guraiz is in the vicinity of Bandipura. At the time of the conquest of Kashmir by Sikhs it was ruled by Dilawar Malik. Anxious to extend their dominion to and beyond Guraiz, he was the recipient of frequent presents so as to lull him into a false belief that the Sikhs merely wanted to cultivate his friendship as their immediate neighbour. After having thus disarmed him of his suspicions, he was invited to pay a visit to Srinagar as a guest of the Sikh governor but on entering the city, was treacherously surrounded by Sikh forces, disarmed and thrown into Hariparbat fort where he remained interned for three years. He succeeded in escaping to Guraiz where he was readily welcomed by his people, especially because they had a bitter taste of Sikh mis-government in his absence. A few years later, Sikhs invaded Guraiz and defeated him. He fled to Gilgit where he died soon afterwards.

......GILGIT

In 1837, Gilgit was ruled by Sikandar Shah with Faqir and Shukar Ali as his Ministers. Gauhar Aman had by that time become the ruler of the small kingdom of Yasin. He invaded Gilgit at the head of a force comprising five hundred cavalry and five hundred infantry. Sikandar, unable to muster courage to face him in a conventional battle, took refuge in the fort at Sankar. The siege lasted nine months. Running short of provisions, Sikandar was compelled to surrender; taken a prisoner, he was beheaded ten days later at Soni Kote. This happened in 1840.

Karim Khan, a brother of Sikandar, escaped to Srinagar via Astore and sought assistance from the Sikh Governor Sheikh Ghulam Mohi-ud-Din.

According to Frederic Drew, a couple of Sikh regiments were sent under the command of one Colonel Nathu Shah, of Gujranwala, who was one of the prominent Muslim officers of the Sikh regime. He invaded Gilgit in 1842. While on his way to Gilgit, Nathu Shah annexed Astore which had till then been spared direct annexation and allowed internal autonomy in lieu of a fixed tribute. Gauhar Aman, feeling insecure, withdrew from Gilgit proper and encamped at a place called 'Basin', only three miles higher up the Gilgit valley. He was defeated and retired to Punial. Both the parties suffered heavy casualties but Nathu Shah was prudent not to advance further and thereby saved his army from being plunged into a disastrous war with the tribes inhabiting the mountainous territory.

A few months later, a Hindu officer in the Sikh army at Srinagar, Mathra Das, jealous of the success of Colonel Nathu Shah and the prestigious victories scored by him, conspired to bring about his recall and take his place. He was sent to supersede Nathu Shah. While a part of the force was left with Nathu Shah for obvious security reasons, the main force was led by Mathra Das to the frontier. When they reached the stony plain between Sharot and Gulpur, Gauhar Aman made a sudden attack and defeated them with great loss. Gauhar Aman's men pursued the fleeing soldiers and cut them to pieces. Mathra Das made straight for Srinagar but meanwhile Nathu Shah, who has been described by Drew as a real soldier, hearing of the defeat, rushed forward with a small force and began preparing to engage Gauhar Aman. However, before coming to blows, negotiations were entered into, as a result of which the Sikhs were permitted to retain Gilgit and the frontier between the two was drawn where the two forces were confronting each other at the time of the negotiations. This was usually the boundary between Gilgit and Hunza, Nagar and Punial. Strangely, one of the terms of the agreement was that Gauhar Aman, Gazan Khan the Raja of Hunza and the Raja of Nagar were to give each a daughter in marriage to Nathu Shah.[1] Each, in fact, gave him a daughter in marriage and peace seemed to reign in the area for sometime.

The Sikhs, however, did not completely hand over Gilgit to Raja Karim Khan in whose aid they had apparently invaded it. According to Drew, they set up some kind of a joint government wherein some dues were allotted to him while other impositions were to be appropriated by the Sikh government. A strong Sikh force was posted at Gilgit and placed under a Thanedar. Nathu Shah hurriedly returned to Punjab, avoiding Srinagar due to the state of uncertainty prevailing at the Sikh Court at Lahore.

1 Drew, p. 182, 183.

After the conquest of Kishtwar, Gulab Singh seems to have decided to over-run the district of Ladakh though apparently pretending to extend the Sikh dominion. Hashmatullah has recorded that it was only after securing clearance from the East India Company, that Gulab Singh sought permission of Ranjit Singh to undertake the invasion. It may be noted here that Ladakh and Askardu then remained the only available areas where he could satisfy his lust for power, plunder and conquest. He had a highly capable and equally bold commander in the person of Zorawar Singh Kalhoria. A native of Reasi, he was recruited as a member of a force raised for the maintenance of a fort. On a visit to Jammu, he told Gulab Singh that a saving of at least one-third in the rations issued to troops in the forts could be effected if the job was entrusted to him. The Raja, who sometimes personally weighed the fodder given to the horses in the cavalry, readily accepted the offer. Of course, Zorawar had not undertaken what he could not accomplish. This is how he came to the notice of Gulab Singh. Ever afterwards, he was never to be the same ill-clad, half-starved Zooraveroo as on account of his unflinching loyalty and total devotion to the family, he rose to be a powerful wazir and before his departure for Tibet where he was killed, had the honour of being admitted to the ruling family, entitled to the royal salutation, "Jai Deva". Here, truly was a man who lived and died for his master. He was in charge of Kishtwar when Gulab Singh decided to invade Ladakh.

......LADAKH

A vast but very sparsely populated mass of land, it was invaded by Kalmak Tartars in the first half of the 17th century. The Buddhist ruler fled to Srinagar and embracing Islam, assumed the name of Akabut Mahmud which remained, for more than two centuries, the generic name of its rulers. Aurangzeb, who then ruled Delhi, rendered valuable assistance and expelling the Tartars, restored him to his kingdom. His descendants reverted back to their original Budhist faith but did show tolerance towards Islam.[1]

According to Khushwant Singh, Gulab Singh wanted to extend his boundaries upto Ladakh and beyond partly to control the pashmina trade which brought in large revenues and partly because Rohtak in Garo was reputed to be rich in gold, borax, sulphur and rock-salt and had a thriving market which attracted traders from all over central Asia.[2]

It was the year 1833. The Rajas of Pashkyum and Sote joined hands to

1 Moorcroft, Vol. II.
2 Khushwant, p. 21.

banish the Raja of Timbus named Gyapha Chochhandar Namgyle who complained to the ruler of Ladakh, Mahmud Khan Tyspal Namgyle surnamed Gyalpho. Since the other two Rajas were closely related to the Gyalpho, he did not pay any attention and, therefore, the Raja of Timbus secretly sought assistance from Wazir Zorawar Singh. It provided Gulab Singh with an excuse to put into action his own plans for the area. Consequently, a force which, according to Hashmatullah, numbered four to five thousand, invaded Ladakh. Among the leading officers were Mian Rai Singh, Mehta Basti Ram, Mirza Rasool Beg, Rana Zalim Singh, Sange Mankuti, Mian Tota, Sardar Uttam Singh, Wazir Khoja Bonje, Imam Malik, Syed Madain Shah and Sardar Samad Khan. The army marched from Dodah and entered Suru. The first encounter took place at a fort, a few miles south of Sanku, on 16th August, 1834. Dr. Neve, who visited the spot years later, has recorded that it was a very strong position, scarcely possible of being over-run, as a snow-peak rises precipitously 7,000 feet above it. However, the Dogras were able to capture it on the second day of the siege at a loss of six or seven soldiers. The Dogras were far better armed than the Ladakhis whose chief weapons were bows and arrows and booby-traps as well as a few quaint match-locks. The Ladakhis were led by Mangal. Zorawar personally stayed back for a month building a fort at Suru while his troops captured Kartse. Before reaching Pashkyum which commanded a strong castle, the Dogras were engaged by small guerilla bands. On his way to Pashkyum, Zorawar demolished the fort at Thai Sultan and imposed a tax of rupees four per house in Jhanguri and Shakar. In early skirmishes, the Ladakhis lost their boldest general, the young Wazir of Stog which cast a gloom over the superstitious locals who took to their heels. They, however, took care to destroy the bridge on the Wakkha river to prevent an easy and swift crossing by their enemies. The Dogras, however, crossed it on inflated skins and advanced upto Sod, a strongly fortified place. Zorawar brought a cannon and erected a battery but despite his best efforts, he was not able to dislodge the Ladakhis for ten days. On the 11th day, Mehta Basti Ram who furnished the account to Dr. Neve, led an attack and before light next morning, succeeded in capturing the place. Hundreds of Ladakhis were arrested, some of whom were, as usual, tortured to death. By this time, winter was approaching fast and provisions in the Dogra camp were running short. Zorawar, therefore, demanded a sum of rupees fifty thousand from Gyalpho who was awaiting the Dogras' advance with some force, some miles away. It is said that the King would have gladly paid the amount to get rid of the invader but one of his queens stood in the way as she was of the opinion that there would be no end to such demands and that a resolute stand was the only answer. It is also claimed that some of the Dogra emissaries were captured and drowned in the river while at the same time, their rear was attacked. Zorawar found

himself in a precarious position and retreated to Kartse and had he been vigorously pursued, famine and cold might have terminated the Dogra dreams for ever. However, this was not possible as the Ladakhis had no regular army; it was a peasant army, directly assembled from their homes, each soldier carrying his own provisions for a month and thus not being subject to any military discipline as state-paid soldiers are, they could not be prevented from returning to their homes just when the ultimate victory was in sight. Next year in April, after some of the passes had cleared of the snow bringing to an end the comparative disadvantage of the invaders, when the Ladakhis advanced to attack, they were surprised by the Dogras at the end of a long exhaustive march. They suffered a severe defeat and the Dogras, using most of them as porters, advanced to Lamayuru without any resistance. Here again, a number of Ladakhis were killed in a surprise attack. The Gyalpho now sued for peace and invited Zorawar to his camp at Bazgu. A few days later, both came to Leh, Zorawar bringing with him a hundred of his choicest soldiers as an escort. During the State Durbar, as soon as a bag of money was brought in to be handed over to Zorawar Singh, the Gyalpho's son, drew a sword. The Dogras did the same and but for the intervention of the Gyalpho himself who fell upon Zorawar's knees, there would have been considerable blood-shed. The Prince retired to his fort; next morning, Leh was occupied by 5,000 Dogras. In addition to a war indemnity of rupees fifty thousand, Zorawar also demanded a sum of rupees twenty thousand as annual tribute. Hashmatullah records that the money was not available from any source and, therefore, rupees thirty-seven thousand were paid in the shape of cash and ornaments and the remainder was agreed upon to be paid in two instalments of six and seven thousand; the first instalment was to be paid within a month and the second one, four months later. Leaving behind one Munshi Daya Ram as his representative, Zorawar returned to Lamayuru.[1]

One of the wives of Chhogasfrol, the son of Gyalpho Tand of Namgyle, was a Muslim lady, Zohra Khatoon, the daughter of the Raja of Pashkyum and the sister of Mohammad Ali Khan.[2] Under the advice of Zohra, Chhogasfrol prevailed upon his father to stop the payment of indemnity. He also started collecting a peasant force in anticipation of a fresh invasion. As stated earlier, the Ladakh rulers did not maintain a regular army. If and when an emergency arose, each family was customarily required to provide a soldier together with his own weapons and rations. The army thus collected was an undisciplined and irregular force which was no match against a modern army trained and disciplined on western lines and armed with pieces of artillery. When Zorawar Singh heard of the revolt,

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1 Hashmatullah, p.
2 *Ibid*. p.

he hurried back from Padam. Unable to secure the support of his father, the Prince fled to Simla through Spiti along-with his mother and wife. They tried their best to seek the intervention of the Governor-General but no assistance was forthcoming as the British claimed that Maharaja Ranjit Singh being a friendly Sovereign, they were not prepared to interfere in his internal affairs. The Prince and his mother died there while Zohra returned to Ladakh and took up residence with her brother. While Zorawar was at Lamayuru, the Dogra garrison at Wakkha defile was put to death. Zorawar hastened to Suru by forced marches and defeated the Ladakhis in a night attack. He then crossed the Pense pass into Zanskar where he received the submission of the local chief and then with a large body of cavalry, re-entered Leh. The Gyalpho was deposed and a leading Ladakhi personage Kahlun Banka (Prime Minister), who seems to have been secretly in league with Zorawar and betrayed the interests of his own country, was proclaimed king. The Dogras built a fort at Leh and garrisoned it with 3,300 men. At the same time, there was an uprising in Zanskar and after putting it down in his usual brutal manner, Zorawar returned to Jammu. Gulab Singh did not approve of the appointment of Banka as king.

......ASKARDU

It appears that immediately before the first Dogra thrust towards Ladakh, Mohammad Shah, the eldest son of Raja Ahmed Shah, of Askardu, had been disinherited by his father and his younger step-brother from the junior Rani—the self-destructive base inherent in polygamous societies, appointed heir-apparent. The Prince laid a plaint with Zorawar Singh who had already assumed the role of the king-maker in the territory, but as the Dogras were not as yet firmly-footed in Ladakh, he delayed his plans for the capture of Askardu, despite the ready excuse now available for intervention. The Prince was however maintained at Suru for two years and then transferred to Leh. It is obvious that he must have been promised support but advised patience till Zorawar found the time opportune for an attack. It was after he had stayed in Leh for over two years that the Ladakhis, in the light of their bitter experience of the tyrannical rule imposed by the Dogras, were becoming restive. In the meantime, after the return of Zorawar to Jammu where he stayed for a period of five years, the Gyalpho brought a new wife from Pashkyum. She appears to have been a woman of strong will and perhaps disillusioned with the role she might have expected to play as the Queen of Ladakh, on account of the deprivation of her husband of his authority by the Dogra "Thanedar", she too seems to have prompted him to fall in line with the national main-stream. At the same time, the Sikh Governor at Srinagar,

Col. Mian Singh sent a personal servant Fateh Singh Jogi to Kargil. He had several meetings with Rahim Khan, the ruler of Askardu. It may be safely assumed that the visit concerned with countering the increasing Dogra influence in the region. Rahim Khan subsequently got in touch with the Gyalpho and his ministers and succeeded in persuading them to pool their resources against the common enemy and throw him out of their country. Ahmed Shah also promised to join hands with them. The Gyalpho being the spiritual as well as the temporal Head of the Buddhists of Ladakh, was requested to contact Lhasa for support.

In view of the new climate of friendship between Askardu and Leh, Ahmed Shah sent a detachment of men and despite Mohammad Shah's appeal for help, the Leh authorities stayed their hands and permitted his forcible removal to Askardu. Finding that intervention on the excuse of doing so on behalf of the Prince may now be lost for ever, Zorawar demanded the return of the Prince claiming that he was under his protection. As Ahmed Shah sent no reply, Zorawar first proceeded to Leh. The Gyalpho escaped towards Simla but was arrested in the way and taken a prisoner. After appointing Mian Meghna as Thanedar with a strong detachment of the army to support him, Zorawar marched upon Askardu at the head of a fifteen thousand strong force. In order to break the resistance of the Ladakhis, he decided to use them as cannon-fodder in the wars that he was waging all around. Obviously, another purpose to be served thereby was to keep away as many able-bodied Ladakhis as possible.[1] Their number was seven to eight thousand; they also included porters. Kahlun Pankhapa was appointed their commander and Gyalpho Tonduk Namgyle, who had been earlier imprisoned, was also attached with them. In many places the valley is impassible; there are mere goat-tracks leading over the top of stupendous precipices and in places, there are scaffolding paths, built out from the face of cliffs with branches of trees and hurdles.[2]

After reaching Hano, Zorawar sent a part of his army mainly consisting of Ladakhis and commanded by Madain Shah by way of Hanola, Chorbat and Khaplu while he himself took the Garkono route. He crossed Indus near Garkono and camped at Pisri Khar in Sote. Here several supporters of Ahmed Shah were savagely punished. He then crossed the 16,900 ft. high Chorbat pass and occupied Khaplu. A force of about 5,000 men under the command of Mian Nidhan Singh was sent to turn the enemy's flank and cross the Thulle pass to Shigar but the whole body was cut off and captured except a few hundred men. Zorawar appointed Thanedars at Kargil, Dras and Suru and also raised a local militia. He then moved to Chay Chay Thang on way to Kargil. When the news of

1 Hashmatullah, p. 263-64.
2 Dr. Neve, p. 246.

the impending attack was received at Askardu, Ahmed Shah did his best to blunt the advance both at Chorbat as well as Marole. A force consisting of men from Karus and Khaplu was sent to Chorbat under the command of Yustrang Karim while Wazir Ghulam Hassan and Wazir Ghulam Hussain (brothers) were entrusted with the defence of the area between Rondu and Kharmong. They advanced to meet the invaders on the boundary at Marole. Reported to have numbered about twenty thousand, including porters, they camped at a high altitude ground about three miles from Chay Thang, since known as Thalokhun Ethang, meaning the battle ground. Indus flows nearby. Zorawar had to prolong his stay at Chay Chay Thang for two weeks as it was not possible to cross the river in the absence of a bridge. May be, inflated skins were either not available or could not be put to use. It was very cold and they were also getting short of supplies. The Dogra soldiers, unfamiliar to the climate and living on restricted rations were losing heart but just at that moment, the Dardis played a treacherous role and came to their rescue. Their ruler Raja Ali Sher Khan of Kartakhsha who was apparently supporting the local resistance movement, had secretly established contacts with Zorawar so that in case of Dogra success, he may not lose his position. They decided through messengers to lay a passage on the Indus so as to enable the Dogras to cross the river. On the appointed night, at some distance, the men of Raja Ali Sher from one end and the Dogras from the opposite end laid a small passage by joining logs and ladders. As it was very cold and part of the river was frozen, they collected a number of frozen pieces of ice, and joined them with the wooden passage, with the result that within a few hours, there appeared an unbroken frozen mass of passage from one end of the river to the other. A part of the Dogra army was thus enabled to cross the river and take the defenders by surprise. But for the treachery of Ali Sher, this would not have been possible because the technique was essentially local and Dogras were not even familiar with it. The unexpected crossing of the Dogra forces which came as a rude shock together with the surprise attack, demoralised the Baltis and about a thousand, together with Wazir Ghulam Hussain, were killed. It is said that the Wazir was preparing for morning prayers when he was surprised and killed. A small contingent of Dardis contributed by Ali Sher Khan, formed part of the Balti force here, but just when the opposing forces came to blows, Ali Sher's men, it seems, as previously arranged, declined to take part and kept aloof. It would have been difficult, in such circumstances, for any irregular force, especially when pitted against a decidedly better equipped enemy, to give the very best of it and credit therefore goes to these unknown men who, instead of surrender, chose to pay with their lives. Raja Ghulam Hassan was killed while retreating towards Askardu. The battle was fought on 1st Phagan 1896 Bk (13.2.1840 AD). Wazir Zorawar then moved to Khamzagund and easily

quietened the half-hearted local resistance. It was here that Ali Sher Khan had his first meeting with Zorawar and pledging his support and loyalty, made a gift of a sword and a rifle as representing customary submission. The Wazir then moved to Kharmang where Raja Ahmed Khan of Tolti pledged his loyalty. The Ladakhi army which had been sent earlier under Madain Shah joined Zorawar here.

Raja Mehdi Ali Khan of Khaplu had been imprisoned by Raja Ahmed Shah for thirteen years but the real claimant Raja Daulat Ali Khan was out of his reach in Nobra and was constantly agitating his claim to the throne. When Madain Shah reached Poyin, Daulat Ali pledged his loyalty to the invaders and sought their assistance. Here Yustrang Karim was waiting to meet the invaders. Wazir Haider Khan, a close confident of Raja Daulat Ali who was with Karim, manipulated the despatch, under his command, of a part of Karim's force, with the avowed object of advancing towards the enemy. He had never meant to fight the invaders; on the contrary he was playing into their hands. It was to facilitate their task that he treacherously reduced the strength of Yustrang Karim. When Karim subsequently reached Poyin, he was shocked and surprised to be told by a messenger from Haider Khan that he had pledged loyalty to Daulat Ali Khan, who, in turn, having placed himself at the mercy of the invaders, he could, therefore, be of no help to him. Enraged, Karim instantly but cowardly, killed the messenger and returned to Khaplu. The army also joined hands with Daulat Ali with the result that Mehdi Ali Khan withdrew his claim in favour of Daulat Ali who took possession of the fort.

On Wazir Zorawar's arrival in Askardu, Raja Ahmed Shah entrenched himself in the Kharpochhay fort which was besieged by the Dogras for about two weeks but without any success. Raja Ali Sher again allowed himself to be used against his own people and informed Ahmed Shah that if he came to pay his respects to Zorawar Singh, the Dogras would lift the siege and gave personal assurance to that effect but as soon as he came to the camp, he was arrested and the fort stormed by the Dogras. Some of his supporters including Wazir Hussain Golwala were arrested and cash and ornaments worth rupees two lacs, robbed away. The Dogras then captured Rondu. Raja Ali Khan did not put up any resistance and on payment of rupees fifteen thousand, was left undisturbed. Zorawar then sent five hundred men under Madain Shah to capture Astore. Raja Jabar Khan, surrendered after a siege of 20 days when the water reserves exhausted. At this stage, Col. Mian Singh took strong exception to the invasion of Astore on the ground that it was already within his jurisdiction. Jabar Khan was, therefore, released and restored to his post. Zorawar established a

cantonment in Askardu which was named Ranbirgarh. Bhagwan Singh Kishtwari was appointed Thanedar with Mukhtar Khan Munshi as his Assistant. He then returned to Ladakh together with all the captives including Ahmed Shah whose[1] house was burnt down. Mohammad Shah was appointed Raja with Wazir Bonju as his minister. Cow-slaughter was forbidden and made punishable with death.

When Wazir Zorawar moved towards Leh, the locally recruited militia was also ordered to follow him. Each Raja designated a close relative as his representative or rather as a hostage to accompany the unit raised from his area. Ali Sher Khan sent his brother Haider Ali and a personal confident Ghulam Ali. Daulat Ali volunteered to go personally but while the army was still at Khaplu, small-pox consumed hundreds of soldiers, including a vast number of Ladakhis; they included Pankhapa as well as the deposed Gyalpho, Tandup Namgyle. His corpse was taken to Leh for final funeral rites. To prevent decomposition, it was placed in a big utensil called 'deg' alongwith large quantities of salt and spices. Zorawar placed his grandson Jigmat Singge Namgyle, a minor, on the throne amidst traditional festivities ; his father Changraphtan Namgyle had already died in Simla.

A certain Hindu, Ganga Ram Naqqashi who accompanied Wazir Zorawar in this campaign adressed a letter to the Maharaja in Hindi. It has been reproduced in Urdu by Hashmatullah.[2] He states that any 'Raees' who served the Raja was awarded a jagir or a bracelet. According to Naqqashi, Mirza Ghulam Rasul Beg, Rana Zalim Singh, Jamedar Samad Khan, Kalu Nagay, Sukhia Kumhar, Mian Mutasadi, Mian Mubarak, Azim Khan and Saadullah Khan were among those who fought valiantly on behalf of the Dogras. He has mentioned two brothers, Neenoo and Chirta probably from lower rungs of the society who had so distinguished themselves for personal bravery that Zorawar distributed a sum of rupees one hundred, as alms, to protect them from 'evil spirits'. According to Naqqashi, ten thousand men and women assembled in the Askardu fort were robbed of their belongings. Lest the beauty of his prose and the depth of its meaning is destroyed, the following lines from the letter are reproduced verbatim:[3]

"وزیر اوتار ہے - خود مختار ہے - اور ہوشیار ہے............
قلعہ میں ہولی کھیلی گئی - اور تمام بلتیون کو گولی کے مانند سختی
معلوم ہوئی -"

1&2. Hashmatullah, p. 360-374.
3 Hashmatullah, p. 377.

Trans:

The Wazir is a prophet;
he is independent and clever......
there was a massacre in the fort.
The Baltis will never forget the
lesson taught by hard bullets.

Rahim Khan, the ruler of Pashkhyum who had earlier retreated towards Askardu was arrested by one Mohammad Jan while trying to escape to Gilgit and brought before Zorawar. His ears, hands, feet, tongue and other limbs were cut off one by one but his cries of anguish left the savage executioners unmoved. What remained of his body, was thrown into a cauldron of burning oil. According to Doctor Arthur Neve they first cut off his right arm and then poured burning oil on the wound. Opium was then forced into his mouth and after his ears and tongue were cut off, he was placed at the centre of the soldiery who slapped and spitted at him before he was roasted in a cauldron of burning oil. Rajap Dorge Namgyle, Raja of Chohochdiat and Raja Bange Khalam were also put to death. Twenty-three Dogra soldiers died in the battle, while sixty were injured. Of the twelve hundred Ladakhis who were taken prisoners, four hundred were drowned in Indus. Two hundred thirteen Ladakhis were hanged on trees. Buddha statues of gold and silver lying in the monasteries at Hanley and Tashigong Gumpas were carried away.

This was the pattern of punishment usually inflicted on fallen enemies by Zorawar. In another battle when the Dogra forces defeated the local defenders, Zorawar cut off the hand of the local commander, Suka Mir, and put it on display on a pole at the Khalatse bridge. According to Ferguson, it was stolen by a cat and the villagers, afraid of severe reprisals, cut the hand of a dead Lama and replaced it there. This shows the terror struck in the occupied territory by his boundless butcheries. In this case also burning oil was poured on his wounds. His tongue was then cut off before being hanged. Both Rahim Khan and Suka Mir were also poets of repute whose ballads and patriotic songs stirred the Ladakhi youth in their struggle against the invading Dogras. It was perhaps particularly for this reason that their tongues were also cruely cut off. According to E.F. Knight, when Dogras invaded Kharbu, the whole town was burnt down. Some of the Rajas were taken to Jammu as prisoners to die unattended and uncared for.

When after over-running Askardu, Gulab Singh reported to the Sikh Court that on account of the so called disaffection of the people with their ruler Ahmed Shah, his son Mohammad Shah had been put on the throne, Prince Naunihal Singh who was then practically ruling in the

name of his father, declined to accept the change and ordered in writing the reinstatement of Ahmed Shah on the condition that he send tribute to Lahore. Before any concrete steps could be taken by Naunihal to bring about the reinstatement of the deposed ruler, Gulab Singh engineered a revolt in Mandi, East Punjab. General Ventura and Ajeet Singh Sandhawalia who were both hostile to the Dogras subdued the chieftain and brought him to Amritsar as a prisoner. Meanwhile, occurred the death of Kharak Singh as well as that of Naunihal Singh. Gulab Singh was now free to pursue his thrust in Ladakh and Tibet.[1]

DOGRA INVASION OF TIBET

After the death of Naunihal, Gulab Singh felt himself unhindered in pushing his thrust towards Tibet. The excuse advanced was that Garo should pay tribute to Lahore as it was a dependency of Askardu and that Lhasa should also pay tribute to Lahore instead of paying it to the Chinese. Tibet was under Chinese suzerainty.

According to Smyth, the reason for the invasion of Tibet, apart from the unquenched thirst for conquest, was the belief that Buddhist shrines there and particularly in Lhasa were of solid gold and silver and that there was a gold mine worked by the Chinese Tartars.[2]

Gulab Singh had great faith in the capacity of Zorawar to achieve its conquest and, therefore, all that was needed was adequate preparation for the invasion. Zorawar has been described by Dr. Neve as a born-general and there is no doubt that no single individual did so much as he to extend and consolidate the Dogra kingdom and build up its treasures though the means employed were most cruel and inhuman. Ultimately, the task force consisting of 500 Mian Rajputs (Gulab's own clan) 800 Rohillas and 9000 Hillmen proceeded under Zorawar via Kishtwar and Zanskar to Leh. A battalion of the infantry with two guns was sent via Srinagar alongwith hundreds of Kashmiris as unpaid and forcibly recruited porters.[3]

In Leh, Zorawar recruited a local militia of four to five thousand men apart from picking hundreds of porters. The militia units from Baltistan and Ladakh, though headed by their own leaders, were placed under Dogra officers. The over-all command of the Ladakhi troops was given to Nono Sanam, the brother of the Ladakhi ruler at the time of the first Dogra invasion. Ghulam Khan, the former Raja of Chhajhot and Sevang Satubadan, the Head of the Buzargo area who had been

1 Khushwant, V.II, p. 11.
2 & 3 Smyth, p. 215-216.

earlier jailed, were released and placed with the Ladakhi force. One column which was placed under the command of Rai Singh left via Rupshu while Zorawar left Leh in May 1841 via Changla Vatankhi. Both the forces got together, as planned, some distance behind Rudok which was the first major town in Tibet. The Lhasa garrison which did not exceed three hundred men, entrenched itself in the fort which was besieged. The Tibetan commander was killed and the fort captured. He then left for Garku via Lubra and despatched Mehta Basti Ram to Tishi Gong. There was little resistance on the way and the two armies again got together at Gar. Except for a small hut, there were no houses in the town but only tents. Zorawar then proceeded to Mansar without any resistance. There are three nullahs situate at some distance which ultimately join Sutlej; the middle one is known as Sartukapu. While the Wazir was resting here for the night, he was attacked by a detachment of the Lhasa army from the frontier post Purang, which was, however, repulsed. Zorawar then resumed his advance and halted at Manasarowar lake which takes two to three days to go round it on foot. It is locally known as Somamachham.[1]

It is stated by Hashmatullah[2] that when Dogra forces reached Taqlakhar, which is opposite river Ghagra and only fifteen to twenty miles from the borders of Nepal as well as the district of Kumaun in U.P., Cunningham sent a messenger asking Zorawar to send some trustworthy officer to him. Mehta Basti Ram and Kaloo Jamedar who were sent by the Wazir, were advised by Cunningham that the supply base being far away in Ladakh and its maintenance having become difficult on account of winter, snow-fall having already begun, they should not commit the folly of forcing a battle right now but should await the advent of spring to resume their march. That this advice was sincerely given and was valuable, is proved from the history of the region.

Zorawar then captured the empty Kartong fort. Wazir Atbara was appointed its Thanedar. Zorawar then moved towards Tuklakote which was the headquarter of the Purang illaqa. The Tibetan force was defeated and Zorawar started the construction of a fort opposite river Ghagra. After reaching Chang Thong, Zorawar arrested a group of Bhutanis, Tibetans and Tartars who led the army to a large plain to the north or north-west of Rubakh where the Tartars used to dig for gold. Zorawar camped here for about 15 days, employing the local gold-diggers under military supervision to find out and collect as much gold as he could. They

1 Hashmatullah, p. 384.
2 *Ibid.*, p. 386.

were hardly able to collect five pounds.[1] While Zorawar was thus wasting his time, a combined force of the Tibetans and the Tartars was advancing against him. The army sent from Lhasa cut off his supplies and waited for its opportunity. At this stage, the Dogra army was at a height of 12,000 ft and the snow having already fallen, they were in the midst of a vast sea of drifting snow and ice.

It is claimed by Khushwant Singh[2] on the basis of certain letters that the British Agent at Ludhiana demanded that the advance be halted but mean-while the Chinese collected an army and as soon as the snow began falling, they encircled the Dogras, who were reduced to desperate straits. They ran out of food and fuel, and began to die of frost-bite.

THE END OF ZORAWAR

When on 7th November Zorawar received information that the Lhasa army was advancing, he sent three hundred men under the command of Nono Sanam to reinforce Atbara. He seems to have realized that his end was approaching and therefore, sent away his family back to Leh. He was then informed that the Dogra army at Kartong had been over-powered and large numbers, including Atbara, killed. Nono Sanam and Jabru Kotwal, who was with Atbara's forces arrived to give details of the encounter at Kartong. On 19th November, he sent another force of 600 men with Nono Sanam, Ghulam Khan, Mahan Singh, Bhupa Kotwal and Mian Singhara to engage the incoming Lhasa troops and followed them, shortly after, with the remaining forces but before they could get together, the force under Nono Sanam was attacked and defeated; Sanam and Ghulam Khan were taken prisoners. Khushwant Singh claims that Zorawar offered to withdraw but the Chinese "were unwilling to let a trapped bird slip out of their grasp." He quotes the Chinese as having said:

> "You seized Ladakh and we remained silent; you became bold in consequence and took possession of Gartok and Tuklakote. If you desire peace, give up Ladakh and go back to your own country."[3]

Naturally, the two sides took up their arms. The battle began on 10th December 1841 and ended two days later. The Dogras were defeated; Zorawar was killed on the battlefield alongwith about 500

1 Smyth, p. 216.

2 Khushwant, V.II, p. 22.

3 Khushwant, V. II, p. 23.

Rajputs from Jammu. According to Smyth, only a miserable remnant of the force which found its way through the hills into the British territories by way of Almorah, returned to Jammu to tell the tale of their defeat and the death of their leader. The battle was fought somewhere between Tuklakote and Toyo. Zorawar received a bullet wound in his thigh as a result of which he fell down from his horse and was immediately speared through. Out of the 6,000 Dogra soldiers, hardly 2,000 or 2,500 escaped with their lives, a thousand with almost all the officers were taken prisoners. The Lhasa army did not pursue their enemies.[1] It is claimed that about half of them died in their flight home of frost-bite and starvation.

Tuklakote was abandoned and the Chinese re-occupied their Tibetan possessions.

On the eve of his fateful departure from Leh on the occasion of the Tibetan invasion, Zorawar did a strange thing: He locked the window of the gate of the Leh fort. A plate of iron was then affixed over the lock which carried the word "TALAQ" written thereon together with the inscription that "so long as Lhasa is not conquered, the window shall not be opened." That was June 1841. Hashmatullah who was Wazir's successor in Ladakh about a century later, found the window closed, the lock and the iron plate together with the inscription intact as late as 1939 when his book was published.[2] In 1962 Nehru tried to fulfil the vow but, in consequence, lost face of a life-time. History is closely watching his successors.

What type of a man was Zorawar? It is always so easy and convenient to moralise and condemn but so difficult to sit in fair judgment especially when one is dealing with a subject in which, by its very nature, a total detachment even when claimed, is really hardly possible.

His contemporary Smyth who can be credited with acquaintance with people who had first or second hand knowledge has said of his statecraft :

> "It was, however, at the expense of the most fearful suffering to the people around, that Zoroveroo courted his master's favour. Goolaub was surprised as well as delighted to find that where he formerly received a thousand rupees of revenue, he now received fifteen hundred; and he was not, it may be supposed, very careful in

1 &2 Hashmatullah, p. 389.

his inquiries as to how the increase was effected. He did not know, or knowing, did not care, that much of this increased revenue was raised by the exercise of the most frightful cruelty on his unfortunate subjects. Zoroveroo made no scruple to seize the children of those who could not or did not pay up their contributions to the revenue at the moment it became due or was demanded, or the fines which he arbitrarily laid upon them. These children he actually sent about the country in droves like sheep or kid, their unfortunate parents following them with cries and lamentations. Even young infants were thus carried away for the satisfaction of a cruel avarice; and married women were taken when children were not to be had. When one of the herds of wretched captives amounted to a large number, it was driven down to the plains about Noorpoor, Denanuggur, and other towns in the Punjaub, where the miserable slaves were sure to find a ready sale. Inexorably cruel and pitiless was Wuzeer Zoroveroo in pursuing the interests of his master, and he has been known to have captives cut to pieces for either attempting to escape, refusing to proceed, or even for fainting on the road."[1]

It has been already observed that Zorawar sent away his family from Tibet. This portrays him as a man who was not only kind to his wife and children but loyal and loving to the foolish extent of not being able to bear their separation even when on a most perilous expedition of war. Smyth records that he did not get any pay and wore those clothes only which were sent for him from time to time by his master. He also testifies that he was personally honest in money matters and possessed the quality of reconciling enemies. A brave man himself, he had the quality of recognising it among his subordinates—an unusual one—as is demonstrated by his distribution of rupees one hundred of those days in alms for protection against 'evil spirits' of two ordinary soldiers whose names suggest their origin from low castes. When we compare these enviable aspects of his character with the savage ruthlessness displayed in punishing fallen foes such as the horrified and revolting treatment meted out to Rahim Khan, Suka Mir and scores of others who have remained unknown because of not being socially important or the sickening methods employed to fill in the coffers of Gulab Singh, one gets the impression of a man of extremes whose sole ambition, it seems, was to live and die for his master. It was this fanatically blind and over-powering ambitious pursuit of the desire to please his master, that led him to perpetrate acts that send a wave of cold shiver through one's veins. However, it goes to his credit that despite being the chief

1 Smyth, p. 213.

implementor of Gulab's policy of plunder and pillage in these vast areas, and subsequently its king-maker, he did not loose his head but retained the qualities of his peasant origin, when he had just begun his ascent to ultimate power as mere Zooraveroo.

THE REVOLT IN LADAKH

It appears that those imprisoned by the Chinese remained in captivity for a long time because there is evidence that sometime after the purchase of Kashmir, Gulab Singh wrote to the Governor-General for permission to send a mission to Nepal to secure their release. The request was turned down but he was advised to get in touch with the British Resident in Nepal.

It was only natural that the route of the Dogras in Tibet, particularly the death of Zorawar whose very name had come to be abhorred, should have had its repercussions in the whole region.

A Ladakhi, Achu Ganbu, used to head the traditional annual embassy from Leh to Lhasa. He sought the help of the Commander-in-Chief of the Lhasa forces for the expulsion of the Dogras. In Baisakh 1899 Bk. (April 1842), he is said to have personally led a force of 3,000 men to Leh. Reinforcements also came from different parts. Most of them, however, were armed with bows and arrows or wooden spears. Amidst great rejoicings, Jigmat Singge Namgyle was proclaimed the King of Ladakh.

Zorawar had built a temple in Leh as thanks-giving and in celebration of his conquest. It appears that he had taken a vow at the time of his departure for Ladakh to build a temple for the worship of his favourite Deity if he succeeded in the venture. It is also apparent that free, forced labour and material must have come from the locals. Perhaps the temple was better-looking than the queer-looking Buddhist gumpas and had for all these reasons attracted popular hatred and become a symbol of Dogra domination. Construction of the temple may have also roused fears of the likely imposition of Hinduism which had over the centuries expelled Buddhsim from the sub-continent where it had taken birth. In such circumstances it was natural that the first popular act, impulsively executed soon after the proclamation of independence was the destruction of the temple. It was raised to the ground and the idols either broken

or disfigured. At this moment part of the Dogra army was in the Leh fort under Meghna Thanedar while the remainder was with Kamidan Pehalwan Singh in Karoze Bagh. Sensing danger, Kamidan shifted to the king's stables which had bigger accommodation. The Ladakhis besieged the cantonment, the fort as well as the stables but in the morning the Dogras rushed out, fell upon them and carried the day. Avenging the demolition of the temple, they destroyed the Buddhist shrines and emptied them of what had been collected since their last plunder. Jigmat Singge Namgyle and his mother fled to Tibet for fear of their lives. The Dogras and a detachment of the Lhasa army then clashed at Long Yughma in which the former were defeated. They lost around 300 men. Outside Leh, the Kahlun of Lamba caught hold of the Dogras garrisoned in the fort and drowned them in Indus by dropping them from over the bridge at Darkate. The Raja of Sote also raised the banner of revolt and murdered the Dogras posted at Pisrikhar. The Dogra posts at Moru and Kartse suffered the same fate. Haider Khan of Shigar, Kazim Beg of Askardu, Raja Ali Khan of Rondu and Khurram Khan of Karus joined hands with Yustrang Karim and arrested Bhagwan Singh, Thanedar of Askardu alongwith his force as well as Sulamain Khan, the Raja of Shigar and Mohammad Shah the Raja of Askardu who refused to join hands with them. Wazir Shujah of Nagar descended with a force of 140 soldiers to support the overthrow of the Dogras. The principal leader of the revolt was Haider Khan.

Gulab Singh learnt of the death of Zorawar and the destruction of his forces at Balakot. He recalled Diwan Hari Chand immediately and returned to Jammu together with Dhian Singh. After sending one sizable column under Hari Chand via Kishtwar with Wazir Ratnu as his deputy, he went to Mirpur and within 15 days raised and equipped another column of about 6,000 men with whom he made for Srinagar, by forced marches. From Srinagar, 500 soldiers alongwith a large number of Kashmiri porters were despatched daily.[1]

Diwan Hari Chand had a difficult time in the beginning. His advance column was badly blunted at Haraval. They had to retreat back to Chanagund after suffering several casualties. The whole area was unusually decked with snow. They tried their best to break the Ladakhi defence line between Kharal and Kargil nullah but didn't succeed. After a forced stay of a month till snow melted sufficiently, a force of 3,000 men supported by an artillery piece, under the command of Ram Singh, was marched ahead. The place where the Ladakhi army had assembled is known as TAK TAK MU. The Diwan himself marched to Kharal

1 Hashmatullah, p. 397.

alongwith Wazir Ratnu. Ram Singh defeated the Ladakhis and pushed forward. Bahadur Khan of Kargil who was at Kharal had to withdraw first to Linkore and then towards Suru river as the first place was within the range of Dogra artillery that had been fixed at a considerable height. The Dogras had also closed the passage on the river. Bahadur Khan and his men finding themselves in a desperate position, jumped into the river in order to swim it across but were subjected to heavy firing. Very few were able to escape; some were drowned while others got killed. The Dogras entered Kargil and built a new fort. Pisrikhar was also burnt down. The local people were subjected to torture and extortion. On their way they destroyed other forts also; the doors, windows and roofings were removed to Kargil for use in the construction of the cantonment. When this column reached Bodhkhar, Mohammad Ali Khan, the Raja of Pashkyum and the brother of Zohra Khatoon who has been noticed earlier, came up with 30 soldiers to stem the Dogra tide. Many a Dogras were killed as the band had deliberately plunged itself into a blood bath; twenty-nine of his men as well as the Raja himself died heroically on the battlefield. The only man who escaped death ran to Jagtan to tell what had happened. Mohammad Ali's relatives thereupon took away his corpse. Another Raja Mohammad Ali Khan, the brother of Kahlun Rahim Khan merely removed the flooring of the bridge at Khalsa, which detained the Dogras for two days. From here, the army was divided into two columns which again got together at Bazgo, destroying all the forts in their way including those at Tangsogong, Raflan and Narse. Ultimately, they reached Leh. Meanwhile, a thousand Lhasa soldiers who crossed the Chingase pass were defeated and imprisoned in the fort but they attacked the guards at night and ran away. Pursued, about a hundred were killed while many were taken as prisoners. When news of the disaster reached Lhasa, the Commander-in-Chief personally led a force of 6,000 men to Long Yugma. They held fortified positions and defeated the Dogras. About 300 were killed. At this stage, Achu Gonbu who has been already noticed, played a treacherous role. He joined hands with the Dogras and being familiar with the area, advised them to divert an uphill stream at some distance which was the only source of water supply to their enemies. This accomplished, the Dogra pressure increased and the Lhasa force was defeated. They had to surrender Jigmat Singge Namgyle, Ahmed Shah and several other enemies of the Dogras.

Hari Chand returned to Leh and left Wazir Ratnu with the Tibetan prisoners who, however, declined to go to Ladakh. Gulab Singh in the meantime sent another force of 4,000 soldiers from Srinagar alongwith thousands of Kashmiri porters. Ahmed Shah remained imprisoned in

Jammu but was later transferred to Kishtwar because one of his sons, Mohammad Ali had escaped to Ludhiana. He died in Kishtwar but his descendants were granted a Jagir in Tral. Salam Khan, the Raja of Sote also died in Jammu while Jigmat Singge Namgyle was also granted a Jagir.

Haider Khan had imprisoned Sulaiman Khan, Raja of Shigar and Mohammad Shah, Raja of Askardu. The Dogra officers and soldiers posted at Askardu had been interned at Nayali. Wazir Lakhpat Kishtwari was sent from Jammu with a force of 3,000 men. He entered via Suru. There were several unimportant encounters upto Kargil. Haider Khan entrenched himself in the fort at Kharpochhey. When the siege laid by Lakhpat protracted, Raja Ali Sher and Raja Mohammad Shah were instrumental in winning over Wazir Mohammad Ali Chhekhat who was incharge of the fort guard. He opened the main gate as well as another door at night enabling the Dogras to break in. Haider Khan retrieved himself and fled towards Yarkand but was arrested in the way by Daulat Ali Khan, and produced before Wazir Lakhpat. He was sent to Jammu where he died a prisoner. The town and fort at Kharpochhey were burnt down and a large number of people killed, maimed and hanged. There was another encounter at Rondu which also failed but Dugoni, the Wazir of Raja Mohammad Shah, was killed. Rahim Khan, Sevang Namgyle, Kaloo Lamba, Chhafdar Namgyle, the Raja of Timbus, his brother Konga Namgyle and Wazir Qadus Beg of Sote were arrested and sent to Jammu. A number of persons accused of complicity in the revolt were hanged on trees. In Zanskar, Deenoo Jamedar and his troops had been killed under orders of Chay Morgia lipway. This Gyalpho was also arrested alongwith his wife and children and removed to Jammu. All his property was forfeited to the State.

In Suru the local inhabitants led by one Ratnu rose in revolt and the Dogra garrison in the fort was put to death. Their freedom was short-lived as they were soon overcome by Wazir Lakhpat who reduced the whole town to ashes and despatched a large number as prisoners to Jammu.

SINO-JAMMU ACCORD

Gulab Singh appears to have realised that warfare in far away snow-decked Tibet, apart from being highly expensive, was not worth the cost in men and material involved. He also seems to have realised that Tibet being a province of China, interference may provoke the Chinese and result in his expulsion also from Ladakh. The Sikhs at Lahore were still intact and the increasing influence of his enemies had also made it impolitic

and inexpedient to get entangled in military adventures so far away from his base. He, therefore, abandoned any military activity across Ladakh and started negotiations with the Lhasa authorities as representing the Emperor of China.

As a result of the negotiations that did not take long to finalise, an agreement with the Lhasa representative of the Chinese Emperor was signed at Lhasa on 2nd Asuj 1899 Bk (17th October, 1842). The original is in Persian. Hashmatullah has carried its Urdu translation but has not given the date of the agreement. The original text in Persian has been reproduced by Hargopal Khasta together with the date. However, Hashmatullah is uptodate with all the details. The agreement can be summarised as under:

1. An official Lhasa trade delegation will annually visit Ladakh carrying two hundred horse-loads of Chinese tea. The requisite transport within Ladakh will be provided by the Ladakh authorities free of charge. A representative of the Gyalpho will lead an annual mission to Lhasa. He will be provided 200 beasts of burden, 15 horses, 10 yaks and 3 servants within Tibet as also boats to cross rivers, kitchen and tents or houses to keep his belongings.

2. Ladakh will annually send the following presents and gifts to Lhasa:

   I. (*a*) Gold 3¼ tolas;
      (*b*) Saffron 35 tolas;
      (*c*) Cotton cloth Yarkandi six rolls.

   II. (*a*) Brocade 1 roll each ;
      (*b*) Dried apricot 1 maund each;
      (*c*) White Cloth 2 yards each;
      (*d*) One bracelet each, for :

      1. The Dalai Lama;
      2. The Deputy Dalai Lama;
      3. Four members of the Lhasa Cabinet;
      4. Commander-in-Chief;
      5. Deputy Commander-in-Chief;

III. The following officers were to be presented one maund of dried apricot, two yards of white cloth and a bracelet each: The senior Lama of Gumpa Galan; the Koshaks.

IV. One maund of dried apricot and a bracelet each for Gumpas not headed by Koshaks and the Chinese representative at Lhasa.

The Embassy was to receive 20 days free ration on its return Journey.

3. The following gifts were to be sent from Lhasa to Ladakh: Green tea 22 Damu, Chinese cloth 7 rolls, Pattu of Lhasa 2 rolls, a bracelet and tabarruk (benidiction).

THE SIKHA SHAHI

The Sikh rule lasted for twenty eight years only and came to an end with the signing of the infamous Treaty of Amritsar.

The entry of the Sikh army signalled the total break-down of law and order. It is difficult to imagine what actually happened. Every soldier acted in the way he liked,considering himself to be the Master of the situation. Subject to no discipline and encouraged by the dissolute and rapacious conduct of their own senior officers, the pursuit of loot took them to farthest corners of the Valley. Gold, silver, nickle, pashmina, pattu, wood carvings, beautiful faces, even sheep, corn and fowls, nothing escaped their plunderous pursuit. It looked as if hordes of hungry vultures had descended upon the land. There must have hardly been a Muslim home which did not suffer, a bread-winner killed, a female abducted, or household goods and valuables robbed away; Diwan Misr Chand having himself set the pattern for lawlessness. In Srinagar city the sheer weight of Muslim population operated as some restraint but outside the city, the armed soldier was absolutely free to do what he liked. During the last 494 years, the Valley had been under uninterrupted Muslim rule. It was therefore natural that the news of the Sikh victory sent a wave of despair and in the resultant uncertainty, thousands of Muslims abandoned their homes and escaped towards remote mountains while many a leading families sent away their womenfolk to far-flung villages.

It appears that the Maharaja received reports about the pillageous conduct of Diwan Misr Chand and the troops under his command. At last, when Diwan Devi Das met him at Amritsar and told him how serious the situation in Kashmir was,[1] the Maharaja deputed

1 Sohan Lal, p. 270.

Faqir Aziz-ud-Din and Diwan Badri Das to make an on-the-spot enquiry of the actual state of affairs.

The very fact that it took the Commissioners three months to complete their enquiries shows how widespread the complaints were. What they reported is not known but the fact that despite the continuous flow of large presents from Srinagar, which was the accepted pattern of winning Ranjit's favour, Diwan Misr Chand was soon afterwards recalled, indicates that the Commissioners may have reported against him. Diwan Misr Chand brought with him a large number of notables who had been taken captives. Among them were Namdar Khan, Mohammad Ali, Noor Shah and other Rajas and Kardars of the territories of Khakha and Bamba as well as representatives of small chieftains. In order to please the Maharaja so as to escape punishment he deserved for his mis-government and tyranny, Misr Chand presented an amount of rupees 25 lacs in cash[1], apart from other presents which he had extracted from the people in a few months of his stay at the point of bayonets, as an immediate 'nazar' for the Sikh Sovereign. An equal amount atleast must have gone into the pockets of the Diwan himself, Birbal, the revenue agency and the soldiery. The reader can well imagine the tyranny that must have gone in extracting rupees 50 lacs or so from a population of six lacs including children, females, the aged and the infirm. As anticipated by the Diwan, no action was taken against him.

Diwan Moti Ram whose late father Mohkam Chand had loyally served the Maharaja and commanded many a victorious battle on account of which he had been conferred the title of 'Fateh-Naseeb', succeeded to the important governorship. Carefully groomed for important offices, Moti Ram was humane and had the good of people at heart. Realising that peasantry was the backbone of the economy and on their contentment depended the Government revenue, he tried to stop, as far as he could, their eviction from lands and its distribution among Hindus and Sikhs. He also tried to persuade Birbal and his Pandit tax-collectors to lessen their illegal exactions so that the Muslim peasantry could be persuaded to stop the abandonment of lands, which apart from leading to other consequences, had already brought down Government revenue because of the peasant's realisation that it was as bad not to cultivate his land at all as to cultivate it and then, after the family's sweat and tears, be deprived of the fruits of their labour. However, the Pandit employees led by Birbal had not conspired with

1 Umdatut Tawarikh, p. 261.

Ranjit Singh for a just order. They were determined to have their pound of flesh. Confident of the Dogra brothers support in the Sikh Court, they ignored the Governor and in retaliation conspired for his recall. It appears to have become Birbal's life-ambition to be nominated Governor of Kashmir. He, therefore, not only maintained friendly relations with the Sikh soldiers on duty in Kashmir but also sent, regularly, presents to the Sikh ruler. That is why when Diwan Badri Das, who then headed the Revenue department, wrote to Ranjit Singh that famine had overtaken Kashmir and that parents were selling their children, instead of taking action against Birbal and his corrupt staff, he recalled Moti Ram and replaced him with Hari Singh Nalva.

A daring soldier in the battlefield and the most famous of Ranjit's Commanders, Nalva was not a good administrator. During the early part of his tenure, he remained under the baneful influence of the Pandit officials, though during the later period he turned against them and frequently reported their misdoings to Lahore but at the same time increasing his harsh treatment of Muslims. At one stage Birbal, Mirza Pandit and Seej Ram were summoned by Ranjit, but on being presented adequate "nazrana" by Birbal, not only was no action taken against him but he was forgiven and to demonstrate his pleasure, Ranjit honoured him with return gifts. Nalva was later recalled and Moti Ram, reposted as Governor. It was during the Governorship of Nalva, that a new coin was struck in Srinagar and named as Hari Singhi, after the name of the Governor himself. Made of silver and copper, in equal proportions and weighing one tola, it was valued at eight annas and continued to remain legal tender even as late as 1885 A.D. Perhaps one of the few instances in history when a provincial hireling may have struck a coin in his own name, it is amazing that Ranjit took no action against him nor withdrew the coin which had the following verse engraved in Persian—the court language :

بیخ و تیخ و فتح نصرت بے درنگ
یافت از نانک گورو گوبند سنگ

His second tenure which lasted about four years, was a period of comparative peace. Moorcroft visited Kashmir during this period and has left, as shall be seen ahead, a vivid account of the conditions prevailing in the Valley. The Pandit community was still in power, relentlessly pursuing its schemes to obstruct measures intended to improve the method of tax-assessment and its collection. Deeply religious, Moti Ram is credited with having been of a liberal and tolerant bent of mind.

Tired of Pandit intrigues and their large-scale corruption, he ordered a thorough audit of the accounts which revealed that large sums recovered as revenues had neither been deposited in the treasury nor accounted for. On failure to make good the loss, Birbal's movable property was confiscated. The next Governor was Diwan Chuni Lal. One Gurmukh Singh was at the same time appointed Head of the Revenue department as well as incharge of Hariparbat. They were not able to pull on together; this factionalism penetrated into all branches of the government, leading to frequent disorders. They were both re-called in less than two years but afraid of the disgrace that befell his predecessors, Chuni Lal committed suicide by taking poison while still on his way to Lahore.

KRIPA SHROIN

The next Governor was Diwan Kripa Ram, the son of Diwan Moti Ram. He was nick-named Kripa 'Shroin'. Some foreign writers have translated the latter word as 'sound of the boat paddle' and Hindu writers have very conveniently given it the same meaning. 'Shroin', as every Kashmiri-speaking person fully knows, actually means the sound produced by bangles worn by women on their arms or the one produced by an anklet—an ornament worn by dancing girls round their ankles and known as "Ghungroo". The word is essentially feminine and is used to denote sex awakening. Kripa Ram earned this nick-name because he was totally given to the pursuit of pleasure and spent most of his time in the company of dancing girls, prostitutes and women kidnapped from various parts of the Valley by military gangs, some of whom found their way into his harem. Boating is one of the great pleasures of the Valley and it is admitted on all hands that even the boat paddlers of his official barges were, exclusively, women, who used to be fancily dressed like dancing girls with "Ghungroos" on their ankles as well as their arms. While paddling the Governors barge or the shikaras which are better known as parindahs—bird, on account of their swift movement—the paddlers swift movement of arms wearing ghungroos produced the musical sound—shroin—which could be easily heard on the banks and around and this is how Kripa Ram soon came to be popularly referred to as "Kripa Shroin".

Sheikh Ghulam Mohi-ud-Din from Jullundhur who later became Governor, was his favourite and since the Diwan had pre-occupied himself almost entirely in the pursuit of pleasures, the Sheikh was practically the defacto ruler. He effected some improvement in the methods of revenue collection but dutifully followed in the foot-prints of his predecessors and amassed a huge fortune through illegal means. During the Governorship of Prince Sher Singh, the Maharaja received intelligence that

the Sheikh had buried a treasure of rupees nine lacs in his house in Hoshiarpur and given it the appearance of a grave. A detachment of the army, sent to inquire into the matter, demolished the so-called grave and brought the money to Ranjit Singh.

It was during the rule of Kripa Ram that on the night falling between 26th and 27th June, 1828, at half past ten, an earthquake of unprecedented severity in living memory and perhaps the worst since 500 years, shook the whole Valley. A large number of people died in the very first shock, which brought down hundreds of houses. A part of the roof of Khanqah-i-Mualla also came down. The shocks persisted for nine months, though their severity decreased after three months. It was followed by cholera which, again, consumed thousands of lives. The dead were wrapped in grass instead of cloth because of its non-availability. The earthquake alone is reported to have resulted in the death of about ten thousand people and the destruction of about 1,200 houses. Vigne who visited Kashmir only eight years later, has recorded the following account:-

> "The earth opened in several places about the city; and fetid water, and rather warm, rose rapidly from the clefts, and then subsided. These clefts being in the soil, soon closed again, and left scarcely any traces. I saw the remains of one fifteen yards long and two wide; but it was filled up, or nearly. Huge rocks and stones came rattling down from the mountains. On that night only one shock took place; but just before sunrise there was another, accompanied by a terrific and lengthened explosion, louder than a cannon. On that day there were twenty such shocks, each with a similar explosion.
>
> The inhabitants were, of course, in the open country. The river sometimes appeared to standstill, and then rushed forward. For the remaining six days of Zil-Haja, and the whole of the two next months of Moharrem and Safur, there were never less than 100, and sometimes 200 or more shocks in the day, all accompanied with an explosion; but it was remarked, that when the explosion was loudest, the shock was the less. On the sixth day, there was one very bad shock, and on the fifteenth, at three o'clock, was the worst, and there were three out of the whole number that were very loud.
>
> At the end of the two above-mentioned months, the number decreased to ten or fifteen in the twentyfour hours, and the noise became less, and the earthquakes gradually ceased. About this time the cholera made its appearance. A census of the dead was taken at first, but discontinued when it was found that many had died in twenty one days."[1]

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1 Vigne, p. 281-82.

Insensitive to the economic distress brought about by the earthquake, the epidemic and the blood-sucking administration that had come in the wake of his conquest, the Diwan on orders from Ranjit sent a sum of rupees one lac forty thousand and golden and silver wares costing several thousand more, for the marriage of Hira Singh, the son of Dhian Singh. Sometime later, the Maharaja came to Naushehra for shikar and, again, the people of the Valley had to pay for the large number of presents. The Dogra family was inimical to the Diwan largely because he gave protection to Raja Faiz Taleb Khan of Bhimber after he had been forcibly dispossessed of his territory by them. They had manipulated its acquisition as a jagir. They succeeded in prejudicing the Maharaja against him. His property was consequently confiscated and he was himself interned. Sometime later, the Maharaja pardoned him on account of the services of the family, but a heart broke by then and the fear of the ever-more powerful Dogra family looming large with its ominous consequences, Kripa Ram decided to pass his remaining days in meditation at Banaras, but died while still on his way to the sacred Hindu city.

He was succeeded by Bhima Singh while Pandit Ganesh Dhar was appointed Head of the Revenue Department. A Shia-Sunni riot broke out in Srinagar during his tenure, causing considerable human and material loss to the parties. Known as Bhima Singh *Ardali*, he appears to have been a personal servant of Ranjit Singh who seems to have awarded him the coveted post merely as a reward for his services because he doesn't appear to have possessed any other qualification. He, therefore, played into the hands of Pandit Ganesh Dhar who practically led him by the nose. Ranjit Singh must have realised his folly as the Governor was dismissed within a year.

Bhima Singh was succeeded by Prince Sher Singh. He entered via Muzaffarabad during winter. On reaching Baramula, he seems to have been fascinated by the idea of a river journey to the provincial capital. This was not, however, easily possibe because the winter being unusually severe, most of the river, as well as the Wular lake, were frozen. The son or, as several historians have recorded, a reputed son of a Ruler who on his own admission made to Hugel, sacrificed twelve thousand soldiers and spent sixty lac rupees in three wars waged for the acquisition of a horse-laila,[1] he could hardly be expected to be moved by the human misery involved. Thousands of Kashmiris were forcibly driven out of their homes and compelled to break the ice all the way upto Srinagar, a distance of 34 miles, to enable the fulfilment of his desire. Scores of them lost their lives while hundreds suffered from frost-bite. The Prince had very little time for the job entrusted to him because of his

1 Faqir Waheed-ud-Din, p. 158.

dissolute habits with the result that Vaisakha Singh, whom he had appointed as Head of the Revenue department, increased the exactions from the peasants, the artisans, the weavers, etc. Pandit Ganesh Dhar after being able to create a wedge between the two, went to Lahore with the blessings of the Governor and succeeded in getting the Tax-collector recalled.

THE FAMINE

It was sometime after the arrival of Sher Singh that Ranjit Singh left Lahore for a visit to Kashmir Valley. The Maharaja stopped at Rajouri for shikar, sending Jamedar Khush-hal Singh and Sheikh Ghulam Mohi-ud-Din in advance, to help the local administration in making befitting arrangements. Shali was at the time sold at the rate of 15 annas per Kharwar. The two officers apart from staying the sale of grain lying in Government stores—land revenue was then realised in kind, tried to build up the reserves further and in their anxiety to stock as much as possible to ensure adequate supply for the Maharaja's large retinue, resorted to repression and left practically very little with the people. Naturally, there was a Valley-wide uproar of protest. Nobody seemed to take notice; so famine overtook the Valley a second time during the Sikh regime. Ranjit Singh, thereupon, returned back to Lahore and recalled Khush-hal Singh. It was hoped that the new shali crop would ease the situation, but on the 18th of Kartik (1248 Hijri) when only a small part of the standing crop had been cut, though kept in the same fields, as is always done so that the grain dries up sufficiently in order to be separable from the chaff without being destroyed in the process, about 18 inches of snow fell at night which was not only quite unusual but also unprecedented in living memory. Although a part of the crop that had been already cut was salvaged, the standing crop could naturally not be saved and got destroyed. The snow was followed by mist and frost for several days resulting in the freezing of lakes, rivers and streams. The loss was terrible. While the domestic animal died for the lack of fodder, the people were all too suddenly the victims of famine and without adequate preparations for the cold, having been caught unawares. Thousands, therefore, died for want of food and warm clothing; their deadbodies lay scattered all over. The Prince was, therefore, recalled in the beginning of the third year of his tenure and replaced by Col. Mian Singh, a Khatri from Gujranwala, who had distinguished himself in several battles.

On his very first night in Srinagar, he was surprised to find the city plunged into darkness as there was not even a single light; in the morning he found that there were no cocks to crow and getting perturbed, undertook a round of the city but was shocked to find mushroom growth all around. Hassan further records that he was not able to eat anything for

three days and three nights but kept weeping, frequently saying that he had been put at the head of a territory which stood in utter ruin. He appointed Pandit Ganesh Dhar as Head of the Revenue department and in addition to the twenty thousand maunds of corn sent by Ranjit Singh from Punjab, Mian Singh purchased some quantity of grain from Muzaffarabad, Rajouri and Kishtwar at the rate of Rs. 16/- per kharwar and sold the same in the famine-stricken Valley at the rate of Rs. 3/- per kharwar. He also imported cows, sheep, fowls and even eggs from wherever they were available and distributed them among the peasants to give a boost to the economy. He undertook frequent tours of the interior and encouraged the peasantry to resume cultivation, promising liberal treatment in the matter of government exactions. He also compelled the hoarders to bring their hoarded grain to public sale. While on tour in Islamabad, he learnt that a jagirdar, Jagar Nath, who had assumed the deceptive appearance of a sadhu, was selling grain at the rate of Rs. 8/- per kharwar. The Governor made certain presents and politely told him to sell it at the rate of Rs. 4/- per kharwar. Mian Singh then proceeded to Badgam but left behind secret agents to watch further sales by the Sadhu. Informed that the Sadhu continued to sell it at the rate of Rs. 8/- per kharwar, the Governor hastened back and publicly hanged him on a poplar tree. He then personally followed his corpse to the cremation ground with tears in his eyes for the conscientious discharge of an unpleasant duty.

He awarded severe punishment to the hoarders and black-marketeers, cutting their hands or ears. On the occasion of the next crop, he toured the Valley twice to ensure that the tax-collectors were properly controlled. Six seers of rice per kharwar realised from every peasant as outstanding balance against a lac of kharwars distributed as taqqavi and seed during the rule of Raja Sukh Jeewan was remitted by the Governor. The share of the labourers employed by the land-owners for cutting the crop and clearing the grain was fixed at nine seers per kharwar. The grain was ultimately sold at the rate of Rs. 2/- per kharwar and if there was any adulteration, the man holding its custody used to lose his hands. One day, while going through the city in a 'palki', he came across a woman carrying a basketful of shali on her head. The Governor got it weighed and finding it 3/8 seers less, the total being 24 seers, he immediately sent for the man responsible for short weighing, cut off his nose, put it around his neck and got him paraded in the city. He appointed 20 Thanedars who were required to dispose of cases within one day. He also got prepared weighing measures of stone and yard-measures of iron bearing official seal. The marriage-tax on Muslims, which had been imposed at the beginning of the Sikh rule, was abolished. Due to his reforms and strict watch over the tax-collectors, a large number of peasants who had

abandoned their lands, resumed cultivation. Within two years, the price of shali came down to rupee one (Hari-Singhi) per kharwar. Out of the jagirs confiscated at the very outset of the Sikh regime, those amounting to one lac kharwars of produce were conferred on Brahmins, Fakirs and Darveshes. He also rebuilt the bridges over Jhelum at Khannabal, Bijbihara and Pampur which had been washed away by floods and repaired the canals and bunds which had suffered neglect since several years. The Governor also founded a new settlement, opposite Shergarhi, on the right bank of Jhelum and named it "Basant Bagh".

SIKH SOLDIERS MUTINY

Col. Mian Singh had just completed six years when on 6th Baisakh 1898 Bikrami (18th April 1841 A.D.), a group of mutinous soldiers, led by Tilak Singh Kamidan, whose pay was in arrears, broke into his residence at midnight and put him to death. Given below is a graphic description of his tragic end as recorded by Col. Smyth in his book, first published in 1847 and reprinted under the authority of the Government of Punjab in 1951:

> "One night he was rudely roused from his sleep by a band of about fifty Seik soldiers, who had broken into his house, even into his chamber, and who told him, in terms which he could not misunderstand or disbelieve, that they had come for the purpose of putting him to death. They bade him rise and dress himself, promising him a short time to prepare for death by reading a few passages from the Holy Book. On this, Meean Singh calmly replied that as they were considerate enough to give him time to read the Grunth, it would be only a necessary indulgence that they should allow him a light for the purpose. His request was granted; a light was brought, and he composedly read some appropriate passages from the Seik scriptures. Having thus prepared himself, he told his murderers that he was now ready to die, and was thereupon most deliberately cut down with a sword."[1]

The mutineers lost their main leader only 24 hours later. He was killed by a sweeper of Col. Mian Singh, who, according to Smyth, had been later appointed as Deputy Chief of Police. After losing the leader, a large number of soldiers either became neutral or left for Lahore. The rebel force was thus considerably reduced but this depletion in their ranks was amply augmented by the spontaneous and wide support extended by the local Muslims for obvious political reasons. When news of the assassination and the mutiny reached Lahore, a large force supported by guns was despatched to Srinagar. It included

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1 Smyth, p. 205.

the Shaista Regiment which comprised of Gurkhas. Gulab Singh came from Jammu via Bhimber with four Infantry regiments and 600 cavalry. The rebels moved their families a few miles behind the front lines to be tended and looked after by local Muslims, who supplied their wants and took care of their comfort. The mutineers had taken their positions across the river. The first attack led by Waris was repulsed with heavy losses. Among those killed were Raja Mustafa Malkana, Raja Hasna Khan of Lehri, Akbar Ali and Mohsin Ali. Raja Fazal Dad Khan of Rohtas was wounded. However, in the second full-fledged attack, the mutineers were routed. 600 soldiers were killed in the final encounter and a hundred injured.[1] In another encounter the Khalsa army lost about two hundred and fifty soldiers and in the final encounter the standard bearer of the rebels killed several Sikh soldiers. As was natural, the rebels lost against heavy numbers. Those amongst them who tried to reach Lahore were intercepted by a thousand strong force headed by Ottam Singh, the eldest son of Gulab Singh who had been earlier sent to guard the Pir Panjal exit. Here, most of them were butchered to death.

The mutiny and the events that followed were an eye-opener for the Sikh Durbar. At long last, the realisation appears to have dawned that unbridled oppression and suppression of the Muslims contained dark portents; so, at the fag end, they tried to effect a slight change in their approach. The first step taken in this direction was the appointment, as Governor, of a Muslim, Sheikh Ghulam Mohi-ud-Din, who hailed from Jullundhur and was in the confidence of Raja Gulab Singh. Having entered Kashmir as a clerk of Dewan Moti Ram, he had to pay a fine of rupees fourteen lacs after being pinched with red hot iron on the accusation of having made money.[2] It is likely that after the Durbar had made up its mind to place a Muslim at the head of administration, the Dogra brothers acted in concert and put their tremendous weight in favour of the appointment of the Sheikh. It may be noted that there were more senior and deserving Muslim officers in the service of the Sikhs, such as the three Faqir brothers, Aziz-ud-Din, Noor-ud-Din and Imam-ud-Din, General Illahi Bakhsh, Tiwana chief Khudayar, Col. Sheikh Bassawan and Sultan Mohammad; Aziz-ud-Din had not only been Ranjit's loyal and shrewd Foreign Minister but was also fully acquainted with the situation as it obtained in the Valley. Selection of Sheikh Ghulam Mohi-ud-Din, in supersession of members of the Faqir family and many other distinguished Muslim officers, was the result of clever manipulation by the Dogras; the idea being to have

1 Sohan Lal.

2 Taylor, p. 93.

a man of their choice at the helm of affairs in Srinagar at a time when, due to anarchy and chaos prevailing in the Kingdom in the wake of Ranjit's death, its approaching end could be predicted by any shrewd observer of the scene.

The first official act of the new Governor was the restoration to Muslims of the Jamia Masjid Srinagar. Obviously, it was intended as a "concession" to pacify them and bring about a climate of trust and confidence.

According to Hassan, it was during his governorship when Zorawar was killed in Tibet and Gulab Singh despatched in severe winter, a force of six thousand soldiers, to Ladakh, that ten thousand peasants from the Valley were forced to carry their supplies as beasts of burden. Hardly a few returned alive. The Governor, apart from providing these labourers, also provided the troops with 15 days ration which was realised from the people by force. Sometime later, Gulab Singh came to Srinagar and staying in Nasim Bagh, personally supervised the despatch of another force of 4,000 soldiers. This time, another six thousand peasants were enlisted on 'begaar' and as before, hardly a few were lucky to see their homes again. The Governor founded a new settlement near Amira-Kadal which was named "Sheikh Bagh".

A Hindu Fakir who lived in the temple situated atop a hill in Srinagar which has the Muslim name, Takht-e-Suleman and the Hindu name, Shankaracharya, had an altercation with two illiterate Muslims resulting in his death. They also broke down the statue of a Hindu deity. This provided an excuse for the local Hindus who instigated the Khalsa army to unleash a reign of terror resulting in the death of several Muslims and confiscation of their properties. Ultimately, Sheikh Ghulam Mohi-ud-Din succeeded in bringing about order by installing a statue of Hindu god, Shiva, in the said temple.[1]

THE END OF BIRBAL

Pandit Birbal Dhar made full use of his advantageous position as well as of the total ignorance of Kashmir, its people and its economy by the Sikh rulers. He appointed his relatives and members of the Pandit community to almost all the posts with the result that the administration totally passed into their hands. Unfortunately, the Sikhs depended too much upon their advice. The Pandit community had collaborated with the Sikh invaders anticipating that the administration would pass

1 Hassan, p. 537.

into their hands because of their knowledge of the country and their superior intellect viz-a-viz Sikhs.

It was under their advice that in the very flush of victory, the Sikhs closed the Jamia Masjid for public prayers; the Mussalmans were forbidden to say Azan (the call to prayer); many other mosques including the famous Pathar Masjid built near Zaina Kadal by Empress Noor Jahan, were taken over and turned into grain-stores; cow slaughter was declared a crime punishable with death.

In 1821 Birbal was summoned to Lahore by Ranjit Singh who had received complaints of the plunder and embezzlement of official funds but nothing happened as the Pandit had the support of Raja Dhian Singh and was also able to show that in two years time, Kashmir government had remitted to the Lahore treasury a sum of over forty lac rupees. Sometime later, Hari Singh Nalva reported to Ranjit Singh about the corruption and embezzlement of Khalsa funds by the Pandit. Ranjit Singh, who had stayed his hands on the previous occasion on the intervention of Dhian Singh, again summoned him to Lahore where he was dismissed from service and all his property confiscated. Sometime later, Ranjit Singh recalled him again, perhaps at the intervention of the Dogra group and sent him back as Revenue Collector. But on the charge of the revenue having fallen in arrears, this time not only was his property confiscated but he was put in jail where ultimately he died in anguish. Pandit Jia Lal Killam in his book "History of Kashmiri Pandits" laments the sad end of their fellow Pandit in the following words:

> "It is a strange irony of fate that he who had made it possible for the Sikh ruler to occupy the country and who greatly contributed to the strengthening of the administration should have died as a prisoner."[1]

That he had made it possible for the Sikh rulers to occupy Kashmir is a highly exaggerated over-statement. In any case, the end of traitors who foist foreign rule on their country for the furtherance of their personal or family interests is normally the same. It is no consolation that one foreign rule is sought to be replaced by another.

THE STATE OF ECONOMY

The Valley was divided into thirty-six parganahs; each under a Revenue officer, usually a Pandit. He was required to pay to the Government a fixed amount of revenue, always arbitrarily fixed by the Governor without any regard to the number of inhabitants or quality of land, etc., in the parganah while the Collector was free to realise from

1 Quoted by Bamzai, p. 563.

the peasants and others as much as he could. According to Mr. Bamzai, "nine-tenths of the produce was not considered too much for the share of a Revenue Collector". Another important official in the parganah was the Kotwal or the Police Chief who was incharge of law and order and was almost invariably a Sikh. He was assisted by a body of troops. According to Mr. Bamzai, "most often he perpetrated deeds of violence and oppression on the people than looked after their comfort, and further, many a Kotwal levied unauthorised tolls and taxes on the people, the proceeds of which he pocketed himself". Mr. Bamzai had to admit that "from all this it appears that the administration was hopelessly corrupt and inefficient."

In addition to land revenue, which in 1822 fetched a sum of rupees 29 lacs, toll at the rate of one tanks (a Sikh coin) was realised from every traveller who crossed the Pir Panjal and Banihal passes one way or the other. Imports from India and the shawl wool imported from Ladakh and Kashgar was heavily taxed. At Behramgala, the entrance to the Valley through Pir Panjal, every person carrying a load of salt had to pay at least one rupee. Every trade and occupation conceivable was taxed. The tax on the shawl industry alone amounted to over rupees twelve lac a year.

According to Moorcroft:

> "Butchers, bakers, boatmen, vendors of fuel, public notaries, scavangers, and prostitutes—all paid a tax. A portion of the singhara crop to the extent annually of a lakh of rupee is claimed by the Government. The revenue is farmed and the farmer (collector) is independent of the military Governor. At the time of our visit, the sum paid by the farmer was thirty-eight lakhs of Panjab rupees, equal to twenty-nine of sicca rupees, or about two hundred and ninety thousand pounds, but a much larger sum was extorted from the people although it was only to be realised by the greatest rigour and oppression."[1]

Mr. Bamzai could not brush aside the overwhelming evidence and had to concede:

> "The effect of this oppressive taxation, as may be apprehended, was the impoverishment of the people and consequently large numbers of them fled from the country. The trade of Kashmir was ruined. The heavy taxation of the shawl trade had very undesirable effect on the treatment of labourers by the capitalists, and in a large measure was responsible for the decay of this important industry."[2]

1 Moorcroft.
2 Bamzai, p. 577.

Dealing with the wretched condition of the cultivator, Moorcroft records:

"The Khalsa lands are now, as heretofore, let out for cultivation. Those near the city are termed sar-kishti, those more remote pai-kishti; or head and foot, upper and lower cultivation. When the grain has been trodden out, a division takes place between the farmer and the Government. This was formerly an equal division, but the Government has advanced in its demands until it has appropriated about seven-eighths of the sar-kishti and three-fourths of the pai-kishti crop. The straw falls to the share of the cultivator, *but his case would be desperate if it were not practicable to bribe the overseer or watchman to let him steal a portion of his own produce.* He has also a house to live in; he can keep his cattle on the mountains during summer, can cut wood and bring it to the city for sale, can sell wild greens and buttermilk, and can support himself and his family upon the wild fruits of the forest. Still the cultivators of Kashmir are in a condition of extreme wretchedness and, as if the disproportionate demand of the government was not sufficiently oppressive, the evil is aggravated by the mode adopted in disposing of the government share. It is sent into the market at a high price, and no individual is allowed to offer the produce of his farm at a lower rate, or sometimes to dispose of it at all, until the public corn has been sold."[1]

Vigne has recorded the following observations and facts:

"There were numerous varieties of rice in Kashmir; the two best are, the Basmuti, so well-known in India, and one that is called, I think, the Lachibul. In the time of the Mughals it was said to produce not less than 60 lakhs (60,00,000) of Kirwahs of rice, which was there grown wherever a system of irrigation was practicable; but such is the state to which this beautiful but unfortunate province is now reduced, and so many of the inhabitants have fled the country, that a vast proportion of the rice-ground is allowed to remain idle for want of labour and irrigation......[2]

Perhaps twenty kirwahs, ten for seed and ten for his own use, are given to a ryot, and he is told that a return of 100 kirwahs is expected from him when the crop is reaped. This arrangement, if the year be particularly abundant, is not always adhered to on the part of the Governor; and more than the 100 kirwahs stipulated for, are demanded, and cannot be refused. We will suppose, however, that the

1 Moorcroft, p. 2.
2 Vigne, p. 308,

Governor agrees to receive the 100; *of this, fifty kirwahs are set apart for the Maharajah; twelve and a half more in satisfaction of his prerogative; out of the remaining thirty-seven and a half kirwahs, the ryot has to pay a certain quantity to the accountant of each Pergunah;—his accountant also takes a share, and so also does the hurkaru, or news-messenger; and the steward of each pergunah, who superintends the proper employment of the land, and his servants also, if in any way employed for purposes connected with the revenue*, put in their claims to a perquisite. So that, altogether, *the unfortunate ryot does not receive more than about fourteen kirwahs out of the* 100, *for his own use, in return for his time and his labour.* Besides this, the ryots are obliged to take back twenty-five of the Maharajah's share, at a price greater than that at which the rice is ordered to be sold in the city magazines. The price, I was informed, is regulated by the Maharajah at one rupee a kirwah; but the ryot is first obliged to take back the twenty-five kirwahs at one and a half rupi. The price, moreover, at which the Maharajah, on representations made to him, had ordered the rice to be sold in the city, is sometimes exceeded by the demands of the Governor, who puts the difference into his own coffers. It is useless to remark on the hopelessness of improvement under such a system."[1]

Pandit P.N.K. Bamzai, in an article contributed to some Indian journal and preserved in the Punjab Public Library, while making a review of economic conditions during the Sikh regime, stated:

"The food of the majority of people consisted of boiled rice and vegetables, but not a small number lived on singhara (water-nut), maize and barley. Moorcroft records *that singhara constituted almost the only food of at least* 30,000 *people for five months in the year and the nadru or the stem of the Nymphae lotus, of about* 5,000 *people in the city for nearly eight months.* This is a striking proof of the poverty and low standard of life among the lower class people.

Peasants lived in dwellings which were worse than cow-houses of this day. Even the best house in the Lolab Valley could afford no better shelter in rain than a chinar tree. These huts were made like log cabins and were covered with mud plaster."

Moorcroft gives below a vivid description of a typical village in the Lolab Valley:—

"The people of Sogam were almost in savage state. The men were, in general, tall and robust; the women haggard and ill-looking. The

1 Vigne, p. 308, 310-11.

houses were mostly constructed of small trees, coarsely dove-tailed together and coated with rough plaster inside. A flat planking was laid over the top, resting on the walls, and above that a sloping roof was constructed, open at the ends, the spare being either filled with dry grass, or serving to give shelter to poultry. The interior was divided by partitions of wicker-work, plastered into three or four dirty small apartments."[1]

Writing of Srinagar city, Moorcroft says:

"The general condition of the city of Srinagar, is that of a confused mass of ill-favoured buildings, forming a complicated labyrinth of narrow and dirty lanes, scarcely broad enough for a single cart to pass, badly paved, and having a small gutter in the centure full of filth, banked up on each side by a border of mire. The houses are in general two or three storeys high; they are built of unburnt bricks and timber, the former serving for little else than to fill up the interstices of the latter; they are not plastered, are badly constructed and are mostly in a neglected and ruinous condition, with broken doors, or no doors at all, with shattered lattices, windows stopped up with boards paper or rags, walls out of the perpendicular and pitched roofs threatening to fall......The houses of the better class are commonly detached, and surrounded by a wall and gardens, the latter of which often communicate with a canal; the condition of the gardens is no better than that of the buildings, and the whole presents a striking picture of wretchedness and decay."[2]

Similarly Vigne gives below the description of the most important town at the time:—

"Islamabad, so called in Persian, or Anat Nag, in Kashmiri, is the next place to be visited, and is the largest town in the Valley, the city excepted. It is now but a shadow of its former self; it contains but 600 or 700 houses; many of them are ornamented with most elegant trellis and lattice work, but their present ruined and neglected appearance is placed in wretched contrast with their once gay and happy condition, and speaks volumes, upon the light and joyous prosperity that has long fled the country, on account of the shameless rapacity of the ruthless Sikh."[3]

1 Moorcroft, p. 237.
2 Moorcroft, p. 118.
3 Vigne, p. 357.

How Kashmiris were starved to death and became a prey to beasts in a land of abundance as theirs, can be judged from the following account of Mr. Vigne:—

'The first object I remarked was a well, with some old equestrian reliefs upon the stonework around it; and, upon turning a corner, I remarked some old and tattered garments by path-side, and a human foot, remnant of a body that had been devoured by jackals, vultures, and hyenas. Cannibals assert that the palm of the hands and the soles of the feet are the best parts of the human body: dogs, on the contrary, it is said, eat all excepting those parts. I found afterwards that not a day passed whilst I was on the path to Kashmir, and even when travelling in the Valley, that I did not see the bleached remains of some unfortunate wretch who had fallen a victim either to sickness or starvation; and principally, as I had afterwards reason to believe, to the consequences of the dreadful scarcity with which Kashmir was afflicted, after the earth-quake and cholera had done their worst."[1]

That the Sikh Governors of Kashmir were pursuing this policy of unbounded repression and corruption with the active support of Maharaja Ranjit Singh and were simply carrying out a policy laid down by him, is shown from the following passage of Mr. Vigne:

"Ranjit assuredly well-knew that the greater the prosperity of Kashmir, the stronger would be the inducement to invasion by the East India Company. "Apres moi le deluge", has been his motto; and most assuredly its ruin has been accelerated, not less by his rapacity than by his political jealousy, which suggested to him, at any cost, the merciless removal of its wealth, and the reckless havoc which he has made in its resources......"

Commenting on the Sikh Raj, Mr. Ferguson says:

"Mosques were closed, the call to prayer was forbidden and capital punishment was meted out for killing of a cow. The Sikh regime was, by no means a satisfactory one. The Sikhs were conquerors who owed their power purely to their military capacity and were interested only in reaping the advantages of their conquest. A policy of settled government or administration with the welfare of the people as the main object was something foreign to their outlook. They looked on the Kashmiris with contempt."

Hugel relates an interesting incident from personal experience while travelling near Avantipura which illustrates the contempt of

1 Vigne, p. 256.

the people for the Sikh administration of justice. Let the German Baron say it in his own words:

> "As I continued to pursue my way on foot and alone, my people having stayed to rest a little, I met a Kashmirian, driving a fellow-countryman before him. The poor fellow stopped every now and then; and, in a pitiful tone, besought the others compassion, but his entreaties were only answered by blows. I inquired what was the cause of the quarrel, but could not make out what they said; however, when Mirza Ahud joined me, I learnt that the suppliant was a thief; the other, the owner of the stolen goods, who had just apprehended him. The truth being made known, the delinquent waited very humbly to hear what punishment I should decree. Meanwhile, some Sikh soldiers overtook us: the effect was instantaneous; the aggrieved party now stoutly maintained that he had nothing to complain of; the thief put his arm within that of his accuser, and in this amicable manner they hastily walked away together. Mirza Ahud explained to me that a Kashmirian would put up with any wrong rather than seek redress from his Sikh masters, as he is invariably obliged to pay the Judge a high price for his decision, without the slightest prospect of recovering his lost property."[1]

This is in keeping with a note of Jacquemont, who writes that the mother of some hill Raja had died, leaving nine lacs of rupees (9,00,000); "Her children are quarrelling over the estate, and Ranjit has just sent M. Allard to the spot to remove all cause of quarrel—that is, the nine lacs".[2] Hugel notes how, on his first arrival in Srinagar when he had publicly told the Saraf on whom he had several letters of credit, that he would apply for money to him when he required it, the effect that such an innocent remark produced on the Saraf was one of consternation. He hastily replied that he had no money and that it would be difficult for him to collect any. It was only later when he saw Hugel privately that he was able to explain that if it was known that he possessed wealth, the Sikhs would immediately take it away from him.

When Moorcroft entered Kashmir, he found Surat Singh assailed by many clamorous appeals from the crowd, hands were stretched out and Moorcroft was requested for British intervention to save the inhabitants from starvation. Moorcroft records that an order had been passed by Ranjit Singh prohibiting the sale of any of that year's rice crop until a deficit of five lacs in the revenue of the preceding year, had been discharged.[3]

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1 Hugel, p. 128.
2 Travels, p. 182.
3 Moorcroft, V. II, p. 102.

When Moorcroft reached Kanishkapur, he wrote:

> "The people in the neighbourhood of the Serai were miserably poor, and could furnish us with nothing but fuel. The crop of rice looked well and was ready to be cut but none of it could be reaped before the permission of the Government, was granted, and this was not expected to be given until all the grain of the preceding year which had been distrained for revenue, had been disposed of at an arbitrary and extravagant price. The effect of these exactions is not only the impoverishment of the people but their banishment from the country and they were every-day emigrating in considerable numbers. A party of five hundred was (to ensure passage) to accompany us across the Pir Panchal."[1]

The practice of 'begaar' which had been in some measure introduced by the Afghans was ruthlessly continued by the Sikhs. A large number of people were compelled to transport military provisions and luggage of the army and officials from one end of the country to the other. Even an ordinary Sikh soldier could command any native to do any work for him and to carry his luggage or articles anywhere, without any remuneration.

The monthly wages of an industrious and expert spinner of shawl-wool was hardly one rupee and eight annas. It has been estimated that the total value of manufactured shawl goods during early years of the Sikh rule was about thirty five lacs of rupees per annum. In the beginning, the government charged a tax of 26 percent ad valorem and in the time of Dewan Kripa Ram, the duty amounted to as much as 12 lacs of rupees per annum. According to Taylor,[2] the duty on shawls was three annas in a rupee in the beginning which meant 19 percent of its market value. Mian Singh then substituted it by levying a tax of rupees ninety six per annum per shop, whose number in Srinagar alone was about a thousand. It was then raised to 120 rupees per shop which meant an exaction of 12 lacs from this section of population in Srinagar alone. This, of course, was in addition to what the Kashmiri Pandit tax collectors realised as their share of the loot which also included a share of the Sikh soldiers accompanying them.

The consequences of these exactions naturally showed themselves in the impoverishment of the country, and the revenue remitted to Lahore fell drastically as the Sikh regime continued, from sixty two lacs

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1 *Ibid.*, p. 289-90.
2 Punjab Political Diaries, Vol. IV.

of small rupees at the beginning to less than ten lacs at the end. Begging increased greatly, the country becoming, as Moorcroft writes, "infested by numerous and audacious bands of mendicants". The unhappy condition of the people was aggravated by natural disasters; earthquake, disease and famine added to the miseries of the populace and many sought relief by emigration. The Valley presented a depopulated appearance, and Vigne, describing the district of Chaugam, states that he saw numerous but ruined villages that were scattered over the surface of this once thickly peopled district. Many of the houses were tenantless and deserted; the fruit was dropping from the trees unheeded; the orchards were overgrown with a profusion of wild hemp and wild indigo. Here is the account given by Moorcroft:

> "The village where we stopped was half-deserted, and the few inhabitants that remained, were the semblance of extreme wretchedness; without some relief or change of system, it seems probable that this part of the country will soon be without inhabitants. Yet the soil seemed favourable for rice cultivation, and the crop appeared to have been a good one. The poor people, however, were likely to reap little advantage from their labours, for a troop of tax-gatherers were in the village, who had sequestered nine-tenths of the grain for their employer, Jawahir Mal, the farmer of the revenue.
>
> The number of Kashmirians who were to accompany us over the mountains proved there to be no exaggeration, and their appearance half naked, and miserably emaciated, presented a ghastly picture of poverty and starvation. Yet wretched as they were, the relentless Sikhs would have levied a pice a head for permission to pass the post had we not interfered. The Sikhs seem to look upon the Kashmirians a little better than cattle. The murder of a native by a Sikh is punished by a fine to the Government of from sixteen to twenty rupees, of which four rupees are paid to the family of the deceased, if a Hindu, two rupees if he was a Muhamedan. The body of a stout young man, whose throat had been cut, was lying close to the road on one part of this day's journey, and the only notice taken of it was by Mardan Ali, the Malik, who ordered it to be covered with grass, that our porters might not be frightened by the sight. Three other bodies were met with on the route; those were some of the followers of Jawahir Mal, who, to the number of forty-five, it was asserted, had perished in crossing the pass lately, in rough and cold weather, against which they were ill-defended by clothing or shelter. Some of the people accompanying us were seized by Sikhs as unpaid porters, and were not only driven along the road by a cord

tying them together by the arms, but their legs were bound with ropes at night to prevent their escape."[1]

Pandit Prem Nath Bazaz, the liberal Kashmiri Pandit, who has made valuable contribution to the cause of freedom since early thirties, commenting upon the Sikh rule, has stated:

> "Kashmir was again in confusion and passing through a period of gloom. Not only did oppression prevail in their time but people were heavily taxed and money was extorted from them in every possible manner. The officials were extremely corrupt and life and property of the citizens were always in danger. The government appropriated a large portion of the produce of the soil and almost the whole of the remainder was taken away by corrupt officials. People were reduced to abject poverty and the cultivator would not voluntarily till the land. Forced labour was revived with renewed vigour, if not introduced for the first time and people were made to work against their will. The country was seething with discontent and to keep the people under control, a new class of landlords was created and jagirs were granted to them. At the advent of the Dogra rule it was found that no less than 3,115 jagirs had thus been granted.
>
> By the end of the Sikh rule the people were thoroughly demoralised. They had become known as 'zulum parast' (the worshippers of tyranny). All their old glory, grandeur and heroism had vanished. They were prostrate and at the mercy of any individual who was put at the helm of affairs by alen kings ruling from the seat of power far away outside the boundaries of the State."[2]

THE RELIGIOUS PERSECUTION

Apart from throwing out Muslims from employment, fleecing them by highly unreasonable, unjust and destructive taxation and confiscating their jagirs and revenue assignments, the Sikhs under the baneful influence of Birbal, Raj Kak, Ganesh Dhar and other pandits, most of whom were determined to wipe out their Muslim neighbours, closed many mosques and shrines. The Jamia Masjid, Srinagar, the biggest mosque in the State, was locked; the beautiful stone-mosque at Srinagar built by Empress Noor Jehan was converted into a State grain-store; the mosque at Mohalla Bulbul Lankar, Srinagar, the first one in the State, and built by Syed Abdur Rehman alias Bulbul Shah, the first Muslim missionary who converted the Buddhist ruler, Rentchen, to Islam, was also closed. Soon after their entry, the Sikhs wanted to blow off the

1 Moorcroft.
2 Struggle for freedom, p.



Mosque of Shah Hamadan
Khanqah-e-Mualla

famous Muslim shrine—Khanqah-e-Mualla but were dissuaded reportedly by Birbal, for fear of a popular riot. Azaan—the Muslim call to prayer given five times a day from each mosque to remind Muslims that it was time for prayers, was also prohibited.

During the governorship of Moti Ram, an edict was issued making cow-killing punishable with death. During the governorship of Gurmukh Singh, with one Chunni Lal as his Chief Adviser, two Muslims—Madin Kausoo and his son-in-law, Ghulam Mohammad, highly respectable citizens of Srinagar, suspected of cow-killing, were hanged without any trial; their deadbodies were then dragged through the streets.[1] According to the same author who was a contemporary of Ranbir Singh, during the governorship of Col. Mian Singh, one Samad Baba of Chhaa-chi-Bal was arrested on the suspicion of having slaughtered a cow. No trial was considered necessary even in the sense accused were then tried. The Governor personally led a force which surrounded the old man's house. The family consisted of 17 persons who, apart from the Baba and his two or three sons, consisted of females and children. Even if the allegation against the men was correct, what was the fault of the poor females and innocent children? But it was the age of Sikha Shahi which does not and has never been understood to mean examplary justice as Indian writers have interpreted it for ignorant western readers but actually the very negation of it.

So with this concept of justice, the Governor, continuously instigated and flared up by a band of pandits, ordered the tying up of all the seventeen members of the unfortunate family with a rope; heaps of dried-up cow-dung were raised around them and then in the presence of thousands of wailing Muslims and shrieking women and children, the cow-dung was set ablaze. One can imagine the savage and stony insensitivity of the Hindu-Sikh rulers to the wild screams of children and women when fire must have engulfed them. The Governor, his courtiers and the socalled soldiers proudly watched the gruesome spectacle of the whole family being thus reduced to ashes.[2] Again, according to Hassan, 12 members of the family of one Ghulam Mohammad Mir of Hawal were similarly burnt alive in a heap of cow-dung on the charge of cow-killing during the governorship of Prince Sher Singh.[3]

Among those whose jagirs, granted by earlier Sultans or Mughal Kings and held since generations in the family, were confiscated, included a divine, Khawaja Shah Niaz Naqshbandi. English traveller

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1 Hassan, p. 524.
2&3 Hassan, p. 524.

Moorcroft, who had good personal relations with Ranjit and had himself witnessed the influence commanded by the divine both at Srinagar and Askardu, on learning of the confiscation, wrote a long letter to Ranjit expressing his profound sorrow for what had been done. The letter contained the following sentence:[1]

قدر این نعمت دانستن بهتر ازفتح هزار ملک است

Trans:

> To recognise the value of this boon was better than the conquest of a thousand lands.

Ranjit thereupon restored five villages and promised to release other lands gradually which he never did. The divine, however, went to Kabul where he had a large following and died there.

In good personal rule the advantage is that people are able to take their grievances against officials direct to the ruler who considers it a duty to punish the wrong-doing official, but with the Sikhs it was quite the reverse. Ranjit made money even out of these complaints of misgovernment, rapacity and plunder. For instance, when Diwan Misr Chand was recalled on complaints, on making a 'nazar' of rupees twenty-five lacs, he was forgiven and restored to his status. Same was the case with Hari Singh Nalva. Vaisakha Singh, the virtual ruler during the governorship of Prince Sher Singh, was recalled on public complaints but made away with his loot and escaped punishment for his crimes by paying a sum of five lac rupees. Jamedar Khushal Singh extorted rupees seven lacs twenty-six thousand in cash, and movable articles worth another seven lacs in such a brief period as three months. During the same period one of his favourites Bhai Gurmukh Singh took articles worth rupees sixty three thousand and rupees fifty thousand in cash. His other accomplices Chandar Bhan, Devi Sahai, Warris Khan and Rai Chand also made fortunes. Summoned to Lahore, all, except Khushal, were put in prison but were subsequently released after making over a part of the loot.

The result of such a policy may well be imagined. A Governor who knows by the example set by a predecessor that however cruel or corrupt he might be, he can remain unharmed if he can spare a part of his loot for the Maharaja, was without any restraint at all. This is one of the reasons why the Sikh rule is the most hated rule in the annals of Kashmir. A famous verse of those days attributed to Mullah Hamidullah, is :

3 Tarikh-e-Aqwam-e-Kashmir.

شامت اعمال چون دامنگیر شد
قوم سنگهان وارد کشمیر شد

Trans:

It was the retribution of our sins
that the Sikhs entered Kashmir.

There is yet another beautiful verse composed by an unknown Kashmiri poet. It so happened that an important official, by the name of Mohr Singh, was, like his master Ranjit, without an eye. Alluding to it, the poet said :

موہر سنگھ حاکم و رنجیت چون باشد سلطان
شکوه جور مکن ، عالم کورا کو ریست

Trans:

In a country where both the King Ranjit and the ruler Mohr Singh are one-eyed, it is no use to complain of tyranny because it is a realm of darkness.

That the spirit of resistance against their enslavement by Sikhs never died down and that they had nothing but intense contempt for the regime, is demonstrated by the following account given by Vigne of his meeting with a Mussalman Fakir in the village Kuligam now known as Kolgam, a tehsil headquarter in the district of Islamabad in southern Kashmir :

"I have twice visited a Mussalman fakir of peculiar sanctity, who lives in the neighbourhood, and who is said to have attained a very great age—I think 110. His name was Sudu Bayu. I should have guessed him to have been about 90; but there was little appearance of second childishness; on the contrary, he complained of nothing excepting that his teeth and eye-sight began to fail him a little. He had witnessed the decline and fall of his country. He told me that in his younger days he had visited Hindustan, had been to Calcutta, and that he still hoped to see the day when Kashmir would be in the possession of my countrymen,—with some other predictions, which were all implicitly believed by the bystanders. Although a Mussalman, his name and reputation are much respected by the Sikhs, on account of his age; a man so old as he, is being supposed to be under the peculiar protection of Providence. Mihan Singh, the Sikh Governor, made several attempts to gain an interview, and offered him large presents of money; but I was informed that he spurned the offer with contempt, and refused to have anything to say to an infidel, and one whom he looked upon as the oppressor of his country."[1]

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1 Vigne, p. 305.

شامت اعمال ما صورت سکھ گرفت

پیر ستمگاران زاره کشمیر گرفت

Trans.

It was the retribution of our sins
that the Sikhs secured Kashmir.

There is yet another beautiful verse composed by an unknown Kashmiri poet. It so happened that an important official, by the name of Mohr Singh, was, like his master Ranjit, without an eye. Alluding to it, the poet said :

مملکتی که راجه رنجیت و مهر سنگه کانان

شکایت جور ، ظلم کوری است

Trans.

In a country where both the King Ranjit and the ruler Mohr Singh are one-eyed, it is no use to complain of tyranny because it is a realm of darkness.

That the spirit of resistance against their enslavement by Sikhs never died down and that they had nothing but intense contempt for the regime, is demonstrated by the following account given by Vigne of his meeting with a Muslim fakir in the village Kulgam now known as Kulgam, a tahsil headquarter in the district of Islamabad in southern Kashmir :

"I have twice visited a Musselman fakir of peculiar sanctity, who lived in the neighbourhood, and who is said to have attained a very great age—I think 110. His name was Sudu Baaba. I should have guessed him to have been about 80; but there was little appearance of second childishness: on the contrary, he complained of nothing excepting that his right-hand eye-sight began to fail him a little. He had witnessed the decline and fall of his country. He told me that in his younger days he had visited Hindustan, had been to Calcutta, and that he still hoped to see the day when Kashmir would be in the possession of my countrymen,—with some other predictions, which were all implicitly believed by the bystanders. Although a Mussalman, his name and reputation are much respected by the Sikhs, on account of his age; a man so old as he, is being supposed to be under the peculiar protection of Providence. Mihan Singh, the Sikh Governor, made several attempts to gain an interview, and offered him large presents of money; but I was informed that he spurned the offer with contempt, and refused to have anything to say to an infidel, and one whom he looked upon as the oppressor of his country."[1]

[1] Vigne, p. 365.

CHAPTER INDEX

THE METEORIC RISE OF THE DOGRAS

CHAPTER IV

The Meteoric Rise of the Dogras

Origin and early disappointments :

Maharaja Gulab Singh's official biography was written soon after his death by one of the dynasty's most loyal servants, Diwan Kripa Ram. It is in Persian which was then the Court language and is known as "Gulab Nama". Being conscious that the dynasty had no moral right to rule the territory, as it had been purchased from the British and that too in questionable circumstances, a false claim, designedly put forth by Gulab Singh, prior to the treaty of Amritsar that the family had ruled Jammu for five thousand years, was sought to be established by fabricating an imaginary genealogical tree as generally happens in the East. Like most of the Hindu rulers anywhere in the subcontinent and at any time of history, it traces the family's origin to Maharaja Sudharshan, the mythical Raja of Ayodhya and proceeds to give a list of 107 imaginary descendants in the family-tree until it arrives at Dharup Dev, the father of Ranjit Dev who did rule Jammu from 1742 to 1780. The claim itself that a dynasty had ruled a particular area for five thousand years, apart from being perhaps the solitary instance of its kind anywhere, is also without any historical support, whatsoever, and must therefore be rejected. Such a claim runs diametrically counter to the traditions, as well as temperament of the people inhabiting north India, particularly, the Punjab. Incidentally, it may be stated that Ranjit Dev's own progeny was still alive long after the treaty of Amritsar and having been banished from their territory by Gulab Singh, had taken refuge at Kharuta, Gurdaspur district, where they were living on a small farm. According to J.D. Cunningham :

"The family (of Gulab Singh) was perhaps illegitimate, and had become impoverished."[1]

Ranjit Dev became the Raja of the Jammu principality in 1742. Following the general confusion that prevailed in north India after the first Afghan invasion, he made small additions to his principality. In 1747, he way-laid a caravan of Kashmiri merchants, carrying pashmeena cloth worth about one lac rupees while on their way to Lahore.[2] The Afghan Governor remonstrated with him but, considering himself safe in his hills and seeking to benefit from the prevailing uncertainty, the warning went unheeded. However, in 1749 he was so troubled by Bhow brothers, the descendants of the elder branch of the family, that he felt compelled to visit Lahore in order to enlist the support of the Governor against his enemies. He was taken prisoner and in his absence, his brother Nousar Dev assumed the reigns of government.

In 1760, the Bhow Sardars, Komul Dev, Budj Dev and Gool Dev incurred the displeasure of Adeena Beg, the then Afghan Governor at Lahore, for having fostered a close alliance with Churat Singh, the grand father of Ranjit Singh. By a coincidence, at about the same time, two representatives of the Mughal Emperor, Bahadur Khan and Afzal Beg came to Lahore to purchase some horses. A newly-arrived horse from Turkistan purchased for rupees forty-eight thousand, proved difficult to be managed by its new masters. Ranjit Dev who was known as a daring horseman, was called upon to tame the beast within the boundaries of Hazuri Bagh. In a few days he was able to make the wild beast manageable, but one fine morning he jumped off the fence and rode away towards Jammu. A force was sent after him but within forty eight hours he returned back voluntarily, after having met his family in Jammu and, presenting himself before the Governor, told him that he had taken the animal out, partly to test the result of training and partly to take the opportunity of meeting his family members and having accomplished both, he was again voluntarily committing himself and the horse to his hands to be dealt with as he liked. According to Smyth :

"It is gratifying to have to read that the Mussalman chief appreciated the conduct of the brave and honorable hill-man sufficiently to induce him to grant him his liberty. In further token of favour, a reward of twenty thousand rupees was bestowed upon him, he was invested with a Khilut, and received a written acknowledgment of his rank as Rajah of Jammu, and furthermore was escorted back to his principality by a body of eight hundred cavalry, charged with the task of reinstating

1 J.D. Cunningham, p. 182.
2 Smyth, p. 257.

him in all his rights and possessions. Under such auspices and so assisted, Rajah Runjeet Dehu speedily quelled his enemies of the Bhow faction, and even compelled the members of that branch of the family to come in and reside under his rule at Jammu."[1]

After his release, he ruled justly and took special care to ensure that Muslims were treated fairly and equitably. He permitted them to construct a mosque and to facilitate their social and religious contacts, permitted them to have an almost exclusive habitation since known as Mohallah Mughalpura. It is also said that while passing through the Mohallah if he heard the Muslim call to prayer, he used to make a stop as a mark of respect and move only after the Moazin had finished his call. He had two wives; from one was born Bije Rai Dev and from the other, Dalil Singh. Bije Rai was the elder of the two but the mother of the younger one being closer in his affections, a tussle for succession started in his life-time. Dalil Singh tried to employ one Teg Singh for the murder of his brother and on his refusal to play the role of an assassin, killed the poor man at Lakhanpur and also raised the banner of revolt against his father. He enjoyed the support of Hairat Singh, a leading member of the Sukarchakia confederacy, and Jai Singh, a Sardar of the Ghania confederacy but in the ensuing battle, fought in 1774, Hairat Singh died by the bursting of his own rifle. Bije Rai ascended the gaddi on the death of his father in 1780. Anxious to eliminate permanently his younger brother Dalil and finding himself unable to risk a battle of uncertain results, Bije seems to have realised that after all, the traditional practice of getting rival claimants to the throne privately assassinated had not been initiated in a hurry. On the look out, therefore, of a person who could be willingly hired for the assassination, Bije Singh soon found the would-be assassin in the person of Mian Mota, the paternal uncle and upbringer of Mian Gulab Singh—the founder of the Dogra dynasty. Dalil Singh and his son Bhagwan Singh were killed by Mian Mota somewhere between Katra and Tarkana Devi.

On the death of Ranjit Dev, Maha Singh, the father of Ranjit Singh went to Jammu, ostensibly for condolences. Here he exchanged his turban with Bije Rai Dev, thus becoming his 'pugree bra', which means, sworn brother. In 1781, he again came to Jammu with a force of twelve hundred, pretending to be on a friendly visit. He burnt down the town and returned only after plundering its inhabitants and obtaining an undertaking for the payment of an annual tribute. Bije Rai died in 1786 while assisting his loyal supports who had been besieged in the Ranjitgarh fort by Dhol Singh, Karan Singh and Gulab Singh of the Bhangi confederacy. He was succeeded by his one-year old son

1 Smyth, p. 260.

Sapuran Dev with the same assassin, Mian Mota, as his guardian. He died ten years later and was succeeded in 1796 by Jeet Singh son of Dalil Singh. Actually the government now passed into the hands of his wife Rani Bandral. On the death of Jeet Singh in 1809, Ranjit Singh sent his Diwan, Bawani Das, surnamed Khooba and Bhai Ram Singh, a favourite, with a 2500 strong force to occupy Jammu. Two earlier attempts had failed partly because the Sikh Sardars were bribed by the Jammu Rajas and partly because of the unity in the Rajput clan. This time, as the treasury was empty, the Raja had nothing to offer; so he fled across the Sutlej and the Sikhs took possession of his territory. It was made over to Khushal Singh on a fixed rent. The practice with the Sikh Durbar was that whenever a new territory was annexed, it was handed over to one of the favourites on a fixed annual revenue. It was known as 'thaika'.

Mian Mota's brother, Kasura Singh, had three sons and four daughters. The daughters are reported to have been secretly put to death by their brothers somewhere in 1811 or 1812.[1] The eldest of the sons, Gulaboo, was born about the year 1788. The second was Dihanu born somewhere in 1792 and the third was Sucheto, born in 1801. Gulaboo and Dihanu lived with their uncle, Mian Mota, at Jammu while their father and younger brother resided at Ismailpur, a village ten or twelve miles from Jammu on the road to Lahore. He had only a few acres of land to support himself.

The guardianship of Sapuran Singh, gave Mian Mota the resources as well as the opportunity of getting his two nephews Gulab and Dhian well trained in the art of soldiery. They became excellent horsemen. Both acquired great mastery over the fire-arms of those days. Before Jammu fell into the hands of Ranjit Singh, they had shown admirable courage in the small encounters that took place between the Jammu forces and the invading Sikh army.

It is said that, one day, Gulab Singh took away a horse of his uncle for a ride without his permission and on his return, Mian Mota found the animal limping. Losing temper, he rebuked his nephew and sternly told him that it was not that easy to damage the property of the elders. Gulab Singh felt hurt and decided to leave his home and seek his fortune in the wider horizons of the Punjab. He and a few other Rajput lads of his age went towards Peshawar to get enlisted in the army that Shah Shujah was rumoured to be raising but on reaching the banks of Indus, had second thoughts about going into an unknown territory and, therefore, turned their backs towards Kabul. Gulab Singh took up service with Diwan Khushwaqt Rai, the Kardar of Sardar Nihal Singh Attariwala in his Sukho jagir, a place in the Rawalpindi district, then plagued by disorders.

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1 Smyth.

It was hardly a place that could contain the ambitious lad from Jammu. He therefore gave up the job after a few months and went to Lahore where alongwith Dhian Singh, he spent three months idling in the hope of getting an introduction with the Maharaja through the courtesy of Faqir Aziz-ud-Din. Failing in this effort and being without any source of living, both the brothers temporarily returned to Jammu. In 1808, Gulab Singh again left Jammu leaving behind, his brother Dhian Singh. He succeeded in getting employment with the Fort-Keeper of Mangla in Mirpur. It is a small fort built by local Muslim Rajas perhaps somewhere in the middle of the 18th century when the Mughal rule was declining and everyone of any consequence everywhere was trying to declare his independence. Mangla is situated at a distance of twenty miles from Jhelum and is the border between Pakistan and Azad Kashmir. The fort is built atop a hill about three to four hundred feet above the level of Jhelum river. Gulab Singh did not stay here for long on account of a quarrel with his employer. He next took up service with Raja Sultan Khan, the ruler of the principality of Bhimber, which extended upto Kotli and perhaps a little beyond. Sultan Khan employed him on a salary of rupees three per month and put him incharge of the fort at Throchi. This fort is also situated on a hill-top and is at a road-distance of nearly fifteen miles from Kotli. Gulab Singh could not remain here for long perhaps because, an ambitious but shrewd young man that he was, he realised that away from his clan and amidst an overwhelmingly Muslim inhabited area, including the war-like Mangrals, he had no chance of fulfilling his ambition of building a fortune for himself and therefore, he returned back to his home-town Jammu.

This time his restless soul did not permit him to remain at home for long and casting off persistent disappointments, he again decided to visit Lahore and try for a career. By that time both he and his brother Dhian had been married. According to Smyth,[1] they were already deeply indebted to a Hindu money-lender, Doolo. Their father, however, succeeded in persuading him to advance a new loan sufficient to purchase two horses and their outfit and this done, they left for Lahore with a letter of introduction from their uncle for Diwan Misr Chand, who treated them well and eventually introduced them to the Maharaja. Pleased with their appearances, he employed them on a salary of rupees three per head per day as personal attendants. On account of their intelligence and hard work, they were soon able to master the customs and manners followed at the Court and became accomplished courtiers.

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1 Smyth, p. 265

It seems misfortune had not as yet taken complete leave of them because they soon received information that their uncle Mian Mota had been murdered in Jammu by Sikh notables, Damoodar Singh and Ghal Singh. In 1812 they were enlisted as Gorechars in Mian Singh's Misel. Dhian Singh had, on account of the beauty of his person, already come closer in the affection of Ranjit Singh. He was, therefore, employed at rupees five a day whereas Gulab Singh, the elder brother, received a daily salary of Rs. 4/- only. This pay, however, continued to double and triple as their influence with the Maharaja increased so much so that, at the end of the year they were able to remit to their homes no less than three thousand rupees.

In 1813, Damoodar Singh and Ghal Singh, the assassins of their uncle came to Lahore. The Dogra brothers decided to avenge the murder and one day while they were passing through the Anarkali bazar, Damoodar Singh came riding from the opposite direction. To disarm his suspicions, they cunningly saluted him with deep reverence but as soon as he passed from near them, Gulab Singh quickly turned back and fired at him. He fell down and both the brothers quickly despatched him with their swords. Ghal Singh whom fate attracted to the spot immediately afterwards, was also cut to pieces. They were arrested and confined to prison for a short time when, through their influence, they were not only released but also restored to their positions. This was partly due to the personal intimacy that had already been established between Ranjit Singh and Dhian Singh and partly because the incident was favourably represented to the Maharaja.

VALOUR AND VILLAINY TRIUMPH

Meanwhile the two brothers had already brought their third brother Suchet Singh from Jammu and placed him in attendance on the Maharaja. Hardly a lad of 14 to 15 years, he is stated to have excelled his brothers in physical charms and was recognised as the handsomest man in the court. According to Osborne, he was so strikingly handsome that the ladies of Sir Henry Fane's camp named him Malek Adhel (the brother of Salahudin Ayubi of the Crusade fame).[1] With his very appearance at the corrupt Court, he became very intimate with the Maharaja and was given direct access to the ladies' apartment.

Gulab Singh and Dhian Singh had gradually shown their worth as daring soldiers and made distinguished contribution not only in the minor expeditions sent against petty Punjab chieftains but also in the bloody battles fought on the frontier as well as in the siege of Multan. At the latter place, one of Ranjit's favourites, Attar Singh Dhari, lay dead near the

1 Osborne, p. 62.

fort walls but no one in the Sikh army could muster courage to bring back his dead-body, so mercifully desired by Ranjit. Gulab Singh voluntarily seized the perilous opportunity and risking his life, rescued the corpse in a shower of unending fire descending from the fort.

In 1817 after dispossessing Diwan Singh of his principality of Reasi, Gulab Singh started building a fort at Bhimgarh and put Diwan Amir Chand in charge of its construction. One Bishna Achal was appointed Thanedar with a strong force under Chhu Madar, an Afghan, to hold the area. Diwan Singh was arrested and taken to Lahore where he was put behind bars. Some time later, he succeeded in escaping from the prison and re-appeared in Reasi. Tired of the Sikh-Dogra misrule, the people made a common cause with the Raja. Wazir Zorawar Singh Kalhoria was at that time in Reasi. Having failed to defeat the rebels, he took refuge in the fort. Soon afterwards, Raja Kishore Singh and Diwan Amir Chand came from Jammu with a large force and suppressed the local uprising. Subjugation of Hindu princes of Bhadarwah and Reasi and the annexation of their territories to the Sikh Kingdom were cleverly represented as proof of the Dogra brothers' total dedication to the Maharaja and naturally it further enhanced their position in the eyes of the Sovereign.

In 1818 Dhian Singh was appointed Gate-keeper (Chamberlain) of the Zenan-khana, probably the most important subordinate position in any eastern kingship on account of the ruler's large harem and his attachment to them. After the imprisonment of Raja Sultan Khan of Bhimber, his territory had been already conferred upon him as a jagir, while Gulab Singh had been given Kharoti, Phundian and Babol as jagir. The territory comprising Lala, Choubara and Ramgarh were later added to the jagir of Gulab Singh in lieu of making available on demand, a force of two hundred cavalry. It was immediately after bringing the severed head of Mian Deedoo who was represented as a close relative of the Dogra brothers to emphasise their loyalty and devotion to the Maharaja that in January 1820 Ranjit Singh was persuaded by the brothers and their supporters in the Court to confer the Chakla of Jammu upon their father Kasura Singh in lieu of making available on demand, a force of seven hundred cavalry.

Gulab Singh had three sons, Ottum Singh, Sone Singh and Ranbir Singh. Dhian Singh had two wives. From his first wife he had two sons, Hira Singh and Ajit Singh. Before we proceed further with our narrative, it would be appropriate at this stage to quote their contemporaries about their character and the "intimate" relationship that some of them had developed with Ranjit Singh, so that the subsequent history of the family during the remaining period of the Sikh regime may be properly appreciated. Col. Car-michael Smyth, his contemporary, says of Gulab Singh:

"The character of Goolab Sing as exhibited in these early days of his power was one of the most repulsive it is possible to imagine. Ambitious, avaricious, and cruel by nature, he reduced the exercise of his cruelty to a system for the promotion of the objects which his ambition and avarice led him to seek."[1]

The author quotes some unnamed source whom he claims to be knowing the Raja well:

"He is an eater of opium, he tells long stories, keeps irregular hours, sleeps little, has a mind unsettled, offers little, promises less, but gives his word; of good memory; free, humorous and intimate even with the lowest and poorest classes of his subjects."

The same hand has described Dhian Singh as follows:—

"Rajah Dehan was active, enterprising, brave, energetic and intrepid to a degree; unconscious of all personal danger, but ever ready to repulse any; despising the habits of the indolent Asiatic life; ever employed in bold and manly pursuits; well accustomed to endure all sorts of privations and fatigue; remarkable for his adroitness in the use of all warlike weapons; expert, quick, agile in all movements; of a most determined and resolute disposition, but when required to yield, no one could do so with a better grace; the master of a most winning, gentle, affable, sedate, yet manly and commanding address; ambitious to a degree that knew no bounds; seldom failing to gain the respect and good wishes of all around; mild and polite even to the meanest class: *bashful and seemingly with an inward consciousness of the degradation of his original rise at Court*; and enemy to the sensualist, libertine, or debauchee, and of regular and moderate habits himself.... But though he may be said to possess, as he certainly did, all those and many other qualities, still the good traits in his mysterious character seemed to be but a well-assumed and well-worn, befitting mystic cloak to screen a machiavellian spirit."[2]

The same source has given the followng estimate of Raja Suchet Singh:

"He was certainly master of all their bad traits and was deep and dark spotted. Without possessing a whit more bravery or intrepidity, he assumed the tone and air of a Bravo amongst them, *always considering himself and his handsome person to have been the chief cause, and means of their rise and power.* He was the bully at court, and the desperado of the Punjab."[3]

1 Smyth, p. 107.
2 Smyth, p. 273.
3 Ibid, p. 277.

"Suchet Singh was, from his early youth, remarkable for his debaucheries. *Like his brother, Dehan he had risen to favour and status in the court of Ranjeet by the most infamous means. They had both attracted the eye of the old monarch by their beauty of person, and secured his patronage by compliance with his most criminal desires.*"

Of Raja Hira Singh, who succeeded his father Dhian Singh as Minister, Col. Smyth writes:—

"Of Rajah Heera Singh, at one time the virtual ruler of the Punjab, a few words may be said. He was twenty three years of age and was what might be called a spoiled child when he died. The pet of Ranjeet, or Ranjeet's own last darling chicken, perhaps his last and most loving victim; made up of many of the most curious and contradictory ingredients."[1]

There is no reason to doubt the veracity of these English writers who were their contemporaries and had both the means as well as the opportunity of watching their public as well as private lives. The very fact that they have not merely given the dark aspects of their character but have been more eloquent than perhaps the Rajas actually deserved about their good traits as well, unmistakably show that their estimate is fair and balanced. That the court of Ranjit Singh was really very corrupt and depicted a state of affairs shocking to any sense of decency, has been admitted even by Mr. K. M. Panikkar, free India's leading diplomat, who wrote a biography of Maharaja Gulab Singh condemned as "inspired" by Pandit Prem Nath Bazaz. Commenting upon the morals in the Sikh court, Panikkar has said:—

"The court of Ranjit Singh was dissolute in the extreme and the Sikh ruler did not hesitate to exhibit himself in public in a drunken state. The morals of the Lahore Darbar were such as to shock even a corrupt age."[2]

It was, therefore, natural that acting in unison and exercising their immense influence on Ranjit Singh, the brothers succeeded in eliminating every rival at the Court. Dhian Singh rose to be the Prime Minister of the Maharaja and during the latter's last days, was virtually the Regent of the country enjoying and exercising all the powers of the Sovereign.

It was natural that occupying such an important position and having almost laid a complete ring consisting of themselves and their confidents around the Maharaja, the latter should have become a tool in their hands. A slave of his own passions, he was cleverly manipulated by the crafty youth to agree to the appointment of Suchet Singh as the Raja of Jammu.

1 Smyth, p. 278. 2 Panikkar, p. 156.

The Maharaja had been made to believe that the family had ruled Jammu for five thousand years. Having succeeded to this extent, the youngest brother, obviously in execution of the cleverly drawn up family plan, told him that appointment of the youngest brother in supersession of two elder brothers, went against their family traditions and that the appropriate thing to be done was to confer the honour on Gulab Singh, the senior most member of the family, their father having already died.

Ranjit Singh, therefore, held a Durbar at Akhnoor on the banks of Chenab, eighteen miles from Jammu city, in June 1822 and conferred the Chakla of Jammu on Gulab Singh, who was given the title of Raja, with himself and his successors as their over-lords. A translation of the Sanad (title deed), the original being in Persian, is reproduced below:—

> "On this auspicious occasion, with extreme joy and with heartful love, I grant to Rajah Gulab Singh, in recognition of his conscientious and loyal service, the Government of the Chakla of Jammu, which from time immemorial has been in the possession of his family. He and his brothers, Dhyan Singh and Suchet Singh, appeared in my Court at a very early age and loyally and devotedly served me and the State. Their ancestors also served faithtully for a long time under my father Mahan Singh Ji of happy memory. They spared no pains to render their services to me promptly and submissively and to give me satisfaction. They have always been found faithful to me and loyal to the State. They have shed their blood freely in many campaigns such as the conquest of Kashmir, the reduction of Multan, the punishment of the rebels, the suppression of rebellion on the frontier and the wars with the forces of Kabul. In consideration of these and other services, I grant the government of the Chakla of Jammu to Raja Gulab Singh and his descendants, and I myself mark the forehead of this loyal and devoted servant of mine with the emblem of sovereignty. With great pleasure I also grant Rajah Suchet Singh the Government of Ramnagar to be his own and his descendants as a reward for the great services he has rendered to me. He and his descendants may dispose of its income on their own account provided that the Rajas be as loyal to the State henceforward as they have been till now, that they receive our descendants with no less honour and submission and that their descendants be as loyal to us and our descendants. In witness of this I grant this Purwana of mine with my own hands together with a bunch of saffron.
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> Dated 4th Ashad 1879 (Vikram)."[1]

Suchet Singh was given Ramnagar and also awarded the title of Raja. Dhian Singh was given the title of Raja but no new territory was awarded

1 Panikkar, p. 32 to 34.

to him. When Gulab Singh and Suchet Singh pointed out this "omission", the Maharaja said that Dhian Singh was the "Raja of Rajas".

In 1838 shortly before his death, Ranjit Singh paid a visit to Jammu, first since he assumed the title of the Maharaja. He spent two days in the city as the guest of Dogra brothers. In keeping with the age-old custom, Gulab Singh presented a nazar of rupees one lac twenty thousand and an elephant, apart from feeding the entire retinue during its stay.

It was after the grant of the sanad that Gulab Singh initiated his thrust towards the Northern regions and Poonch, apparently extending the dominion of Ranjit Singh but actually filling his own treasures with the wanton and shameless loot of its inhabitants and religious shrines and extending his own influence and power with a shrewd calculating eye.

Ranjit Singh died on 27th June, 1839. He had a large number of wives and concubines. According to Osborne, out of the nine women who were forced to die with him by committing "Satti", five were unfortunate Kashmiri women.[1] Of the several claimants only Kharak Singh, born to his second wife Mai Naikan, was acknowledged by Ranjit as his legitimate son. It was after his birth that his first wife Mehtab Kaur produced two sons, Sher Singh and Tara Singh. It was commonly believed that Sher Singh was the son of a washerman who later rose to be the mukhtar of the Maharani while Tara Singh was the son of a carpenter. Multana Singh was the son of a slave girl in attendance on Mai Naikan. Lahora Singh also was born to a slave girl and is supposed to have been fathered by Budh Singh Sandhawallia. These two were imposed upon Ranjit by Neet Kaur, widow of Chet Singh, the last ruler of Lahore, whom Ranjit married through the custom of 'chadar-andazi'. The custom was that the wives of the last ruler, also passed to the new ruler like a piece of property and automatically became his wives. All that the new Raja had to do, was to place a 'chadar' on their heads as a token of his acceptance. It is alleged that the father of Peshawara Singh was a 'bania' named Jai Ram and of Kashmira Singh, a Minhas Rajput from Jammu. Ranjit gave them Sialkot as a jagir. Dalip Singh, the last of his reputed children, is stated to have been born to Rani Jindan from an illicit connection she developed with a Muslim washerman, Gullo Mashki.[2] According to Smyth, the Maharaja himself encouraged amorous relations between the two, perhaps because of his old age.

The reader might have been shocked but the fact remains that the

1 Osborne, p. 224.
2 Smyth, p. 103.

state of morals at his Court was so degrading that Osborne who had personal experience of Ranjit's drunken parties, records:—

"From all accounts nothing can be such a nuisance as one of these (drinking) parties. His wine is extracted from raisins with a quantity of pearls ground to powder and mixed with it for no other reason (that I can bear) than to add to the expense of it.... It is as strong as a quafortis, and as at his parties he always helps you himself, it is no easy matter to avoid excess. He, generally on these occasions, has two or three Hebes in the shape of his prettiest of Cashmerian girls to attend upon himself and guests and gives way to every species of licentious debauchery. He fell violently in love with one of these four cup-bearers about two years ago and actually married her, after parading her on a pillion before himself on horseback, through the camp and city, for 2 or 3 days to the great disgust of all his people.... During these potations he generally orders the attendance of all his dancing girls, whom he forces to drink his wine and when he thinks them sufficiently excited, uses all his power to set them by the ears, the result of which is a general action, in the course of which they almost tear one another to pieces. They pull one another's nose and ear-rings by main force and sometimes even more serious accidents occur. Ranjeet sitting up encouraging them with the greatest delight and exclaiming to his guests, "Burra tamasha, Burra tamasha" (great fun)...."[1]

"Is Lord Auckland married?". "No" (what) "Has he no wives at all?" "None". "Why don't he marry?". "I don't know". "Why don't you marry?" "I can't afford it". "Why not?" "Are English wives very expensive?" "Yes, very". "I wanted one myself sometime ago and wrote to the Government about it but they didn't send me one". "It would be difficult to find one in this country that would suit your Highness."

"Are there any in England?" "Plenty." "Ah! I often wish for one." "I recommended him to send young Heera Singh to England to look out for one for him but he didn't seem at all to like to trust him on such a mission, though if reports speak true, he is frequently his companion in his licentious orgies even in the zenanah and some months ago he succeeded in abducting one of its favourite inmates."[2]

After one of these dance parties, he offered the girls to his European guests including Osborne.

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1 The Court & Camp of Ranjit Singh, p. 190 to 192.
2 Osborne, p. 198-199.

Dhian Singh made frantic efforts to poison his master against his son Kharak Singh, who was represented as being of unsound mind and, therefore, unfit to govern particularly a turbulent people like the Sikhs. Contemporaries have recorded that Kharak Singh and Sher Singh "being obliged to wait for hours together" had to "bribe the gate-keepers and court-attendants to procure them permission to go and pay their respects to the old king."[1] As a prince, Kharak Singh had shown promise in the beginning but on account of the estrangement brought about between him and his father and consequently the degrading treatment received by him at the court, his mind gradually assumed a dark and gloomy mood. It appears that the Dogra brothers were working upon a plan to get Ranjit Singh appoint Hira Singh, the son of Dhian Singh, either as heir-apparent or at least as an adopted son, so that they could use their wealth, resources and immense influence in getting their family installed in the 'gaddi' at Lahore. There is evidence that through the instrumentality of female intrigues and the Dogra brothers' craft, he was so brought up as to be considered Ranjit's adopted child. He used to call the king Taba (Papa) and as he approached man-hood, the army also yielded its affections to him as the Maharaja's favourite.[2] The King could neither sleep nor rest without having him at his side for he alone could put him to sleep. The royal palki could not be moved unless Hira Singh was seated in it too. There is also evidence that in his absence Ranjit became peevish and uneasy and demanded his immediate return. Five hundred rupees and sometimes more were kept under his pillow by the King himself every night to be distributed to the poor on the following morning as alms for his safety. Ranjit appointed Pandit Jallah as his tutor. He permanently resided in the quarters reserved for the King's harem and thus had access to the King at any time at will. Because of his influence with the King, he was dreaded by the female inmates and it was, therefore, natural that nothing remained secret from the Dogra faction, however the secrecy.[3] Dhian Singh was invested with the title of Raja-i-Rajgan in 1828 and a few months later, Hira Singh was also made a Raja. Ranjit then sought to marry him to a sister of Anirodh Chand, the Raja of Kangra but as he was not ready "to make an alliance between his family which had a long and proud lineage and the Dogras who were upstarts", Anirodh crossed into British territory, sought the protection of the British and married his two sisters to the ruler of Nepal. Impatient and piqued at having turned down his proposal, Ranjit invaded Kangra, laid it waste and carried off Anirodh's two other sisters to be deposited in

1 Smyth, p. 26.
2 Gardner, p. 212.
3 Smyth, p. 28.

his harem. Hira Singh's marriage to some other girl was later celebrated on such a lavish scale as if he was a prince of the royal blood.[1]

But while dying, Ranjit could not resist the over-flowing natural, paternal affection for his unfortunate son and summoning him to his presence, gave his hand into those of Dhian Singh, enjoining upon the latter to pronounce him King after his death and act as his guardian and protector and to treat him in every way as the only son and heir of the old master.

Did Ranjit later repent for having gone the whole hog to build up the Dogra family and did he have any foreboding about the destructive role that these clever crafty, self-seekers were destined to unfurl soon after the old master closed his eyes? It is not possible to say anything positively but there are three instances at least that do indicate that after all, there might have been second thoughts. In the first instance, he maintained one of their sworn foes in his possessions and perhaps it was the only occasion when he may have said "No" to a desire so mercifully advanced by Hira Singh. One day when Ranjit was in a rather hilarious mood, with all the Dogra brothers and Hira Singh in attendance, the latter suddenly came up with the request that he longed for a gift of rice-growing lands and then, himself suggested the grant of Rajouri as a jagir. It was then held by Rahimullah, an inveterate enemy of the Dogra brothers who had already unsuccessfully tried to dispossess him by engineering an attack by his nephew, Hasib. He had been earlier taken a prisoner and was released to spearhead the attack so as to give it the appearance of a family feud. Ranjit was quick to grasp the implications and replied that he was prepared to make over Rajouri to the Dogra family *in lieu of Jammu and Jasrota which would, in exchange, go to Rahimullah.* Never afterwards did they broach the subject again. A clandestine effort was then made to dispossess Rahimullah by force and an attack was launched with that end in view, but when Ranjit came to know about it, it was called off.[2] Again, at the time of his death, Ranjit sent for Kharak Singh and giving his hands into those of Dhian Singh, enjoined upon the latter to remain loyal to the Prince and his family and to be his protector. Dhian Singh was not a Sikh nor did he command the army. It is, therefore, curious that of all the officers in his service including the foreigners, the Sandhawallias and a host of other powerful Sikh chieftains, it was only Dhian Singh who was made to swear loyalty to the Prince before a large assembly of dignatories. It shows that after all Ranjit might have thought that the main danger to his dynasty really came from these very people whom he had lifted from nothing to

1 Khushwant, p. 269.
2 Jacquemont, p. 19.

heights of power. Again, when his corpse was placed on the pyre and before it was lighted, Rani Kattochan, the senior of the four wives who were committing satti, and who may be presumed to have known her husband's mind, sent for Dhian Singh and putting his hand on the chest of the dead King, again made him swear loyalty to Kharak Singh and Ranjit's dynasty before the very eyes of thousands of mourners.[1]

With the removal from the scene of Ranjit Singh and the whole family so strongly entrenched in power, the plan to capture the throne by manipulating the accession of Hira Singh who was popular both in the Zeranah as well as the Khalsa army began to be unfurled. To achieve this end, it became necessary to eliminate the male line of claimants to the throne and also such influential Sikh Sardars who were hostile to them. It was also necessary to have a large dependable force of their own. As the major part of the Dogra forces was already committed in Ladakh, Askardu, Gilgit, Kishtwar, Bhadarwah, Reasi and other occupied areas, additional forces largely comprising men from their own clan, were raised, trained and equipped. The dethronement of Kharak Singh, the murders of Chet Singh and Jawalla Singh and the support to widow Chand Kaur, by one brother and to the rival claimant, Sher Singh, by the other two, were the result of a deliberate policy intended to achieve the aforesaid objective. Col. Alexander Gardner who served Gulab Singh for over 45 years and apart from being most likely to know their inner schemes as evident from his narrative, can also be credited, if not with pro-Dogra leanings, at least of being impartial, has said:

> "When Ranjit Singh's death opened to them the field of action, the veil of futurity hid these events from their eyes: their only thought was that the way to the throne had to be cleared of all obstacles, and at the same time, an outward show of fealty to the Khalsa and of loyalty to the sovereign line of succession, had to be maintained."[2]

A few days after ascending the throne, Kharak Singh prohibited the entry of Dhian Singh in the Zenan khana; at the same time, vainly assuring him in a private interview, that he meant no ill but had the highest respect for, and depended upon, him. Obviously Dhian Singh was not satisfied and he decided to act before it was too late. Gardner, however, claims that Chet Singh had, on his part, decided to finish the Dogras within the next 24 hours and had said so in the Durbar. A malicious story about an alleged conspiracy between Kharak Singh and the East India Company to bring about an end of the Sikh rule, invented by Dhian Singh, was already in circulation since sometime. It

1 Fakir Waheedudin, p. 205.
2 Gardner, p. 213.

was cleverly circulated in the army and even letters were forged to support its authenticity. While the situation was thus confused, Prince Naunihal Singh, the son of Kharak Singh, who was then posted at Peshawar, was hastily summoned to Lahore which he entered in the company of Gulab Singh, who appears by a designed coincidence to have met him in the way and poisoned him so much against the Maharaja that he was already a confirmed enemy of his father. The Dogra brothers, using some of the Sikh Sardars, particularly Sandhawallias as tools in their grand design, persuaded Naunihal Singh to believe that the Sikh rule was in danger ; that Chet Singh, the principal Adviser of Kharak Singh, must be eliminated and that in place of his father, he should be proclaimed King. The prospect of immediately becoming King blinded him to his duties as a son as well as a member of Ranjit Singh's family. On 9th October, 1839, two hours before the outbreak of dawn, the three Dogra brothers accompanied by the Prince, Col. Gardner and some Sikh Sardars entered the fort after killing two guards who attempted resistance, and a priest, who had just come from the presence of Kharak Singh with a pot of water. It also seems that the troops on duty in the fort that night, numbering two companies, were in the confidence of the Dogras and had been specially planted there. Chet Singh was found in one of the sleeping chambers of the Maharaja where he had taken refuge and was instantly killed by Dhian Singh himself, who drove a long knife twice through his body, telling him, "Take it in the memory of Maharaja Ranjit Singh."[1] Kharak Singh was spared for the time being because both the Prince as well as his mother Chand Kaur had obtained a pledge from the conspirators not to harm him physically. He was imprisoned in the fort and Naunihal was proclaimed King. Not much later did the poor deposed King die in agony, allegedly from the slow effects of sapheda kathkari (white lead) and Rus camphoor (Muriate of Mercury) which may have been administered at the instance of his captors.[2] It is said that when the last pathetic wish of the dying father that his son may be ushered in his presence so that he could at least have a last look on him, was conveyed to the ungrateful son who was at the time attending a party at Shah Balore, he ignored the call of duty and instead continued with his pleasures for over two hours.[3]

Kharak Singh was cremated on the following day near Hazuri Bagh in an open space opposite the Samadhi of Ranjit Singh. Immediately after the ceremony, Naunihal took a bath at a stream in the neighbourhood, as required by his faith, and started back for the fort. He proceeded on foot because the elephant which he had to ride, had been kept at some

1 Gardner, p. 221.
2 *Ibid*, p. 222.
3 Smyth, p. 36.

distance on the plausible pretext that it would be unbecoming for a son to ride an elephant within the sight of his father's cremation. He had to pass first under a gate-way, then across a courtyard and lastly through an arch-way leading from the courtyard to the place where the elephants were waiting. At a small distance from the arch-way, the Prince took the hand of Mian Ottum Singh, the eldest son of Raja Gulab Singh and taking him along, both proceeded to the arch-way.[1] As soon as they emerged from the passage, there was a loud crash; bricks, stones and tiles of the arch-way fell upon them. Ottum Singh died instantaneously while Naunihal lay unconscious, with a head injury. He was immediately removed to the fort and confined in a room by the Dogra brothers; no one, not even his mother or wives were allowed to see him. It was announced that he was progressing and that it was in his interests that he should be spared disturbance of visitors. After two hours, Dhian Singh first went to Chand Kaur and informed her that the Prince was dead but promising his support to keep her in power, won her over. He then called a conference of the Sardars and took them into "confidence".

Both Smyth and Cunningham have stated that the death of Naunihal was not a sheer accident but may have been brought about by the Dogra brothers because they were afraid that after consolidating himself on the throne, he was more likely to turn against them. It is also said that this was a general belief at the time. Mr. K.M. Panikkar and other Hindu historians have naturally sought to defend the Dogra brothers by conveniently advancing the death of Ottum Singh as an argument. Apparently the argument should have been conclusive but for some of the important circumstances that surround the incident. First, is the assertion of Smyth, that Mian Ottum Singh did not voluntarily accompany the Prince but it was the latter who, while on his way to the place of accident, grasped his hand and took him along. As the distance between this place and the place of accident may not have been more than fifty yards, it would naturally not have been possible for the Dogra brothers, with multitudes of mourners watching, to reinstruct the co-conspirators who may have been put on duty to bring about the crash. Again, history is replete with instances when blinded by lust for power, people threw off all morality and sacrificed every thing for the fulfilment of these ends.

A very important circumstance that supports the allegation of conspiracy is provided by the following eye-witness account of an officer in the Sikh Artillery :

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1 *Ibid.*, p. 37.

"I was present at the commencement of the ceremony of cremation of Maharaja Kharrak Singh, and when the torch was applied was standing close by in attendance on Raja Dhyan Singh. Before the new Maharaja left the spot, was directed by Dhyan Singh to go and bring forty of my artillerymen in their fatigue dress : I was not told, nor have I ever ascertained, what they were wanted for. When I returned, the catastrophe had just occurred.

Maharaja Naunihal Singh had passed through an archway on his return from bathing, and just before entering it he took the hand of his constant companion Udam Singh, the eldest son of Raja Gulab Singh : the two young men entered the archway together. As they emerged from it a crash was heard ; beams, stones, and tiles fell from above, and the Maharaja and Udam Singh were struck to the ground. The latter was killed on the spot, and Naunihal Singh was struck to the earth. He was injured in the head, but presently attempted to rise, and cried out for water. The Prime Minister rushed up, and, it is said, pushed aside the deadbody of his own nephew, reserving all his devotion and care for the young king. Naunihal Singh was carried into the palace, the doors were closed, and admission denied to all. Several of the principal sardars begged to see the Maharaja, among them the Sindhanwalias, relations of the royal family : in vain did Naunihal Singh's mother, in a paroxysm of rage and anxiety, come and beat the fort gates with her own hands—admittance even to the fort there was none, still less into the Maharaja's apartment. None of the female inmates, not even his wives, were suffered to see him[1]".

Of the five palanquin-bearers who carried the body of Naunihal Singh from the spot to the fort and had on both occasions the opportunity of observing the state of his wound, Gardner says :

"They were servants in my own camp and were five in number. Two were afterwards privately put to death—two escaped to Hindustan, the fate of the fifth is unknown. One of the Palkee-bearers afterwards affirmed that when the prince was put into the palkee, and when he was assisting to place him there, he saw that above the right ear there was a wound which bled so slightly as only to cause a blot of blood of about the size of a rupee, on the pillow or cloth on which his head rested while he was in the palkee. He added that the blood neither flowed nor trickled in

1 Gardner, p. 223-25.

any quantity, before his being taken out. Now, it is a curious fact that when the room was opened, in which his corpse was first exposed by the Rajah, blood in great quantity, both in fluid and coagulated pools, was found around the head and on the cloth on which the body lay."[1]

Was there any foul play by Dhian Singh inside the fort ? Was the Prince a victim of violence again while being kept aloof from his kith and kin ? J.D. Cunningham, speaking about the incident, has said :

"It is not positively known that the Rajas of Jammu thus designed to remove Naunihal Singh ; but it is difficult to acquit them of the crime, and it is certain that they were capable of committing it."[2]

The Dogra brothers were as unhappy with Naunihal as they had been with his opium-addicted father, Kharak Singh. They had embarked upon a process of elimination which made Kharak Singh their first victim from Ranjit's dynasty because of his being the King. It also appears that Naunihal had, after the deposition of his father, come face to face with the hard reality that the elimination of Dogra influence was necessary to preserve the Sikh rule. One of the principal sources of the Dogra brother's wealth was their monopoly of the salt range in Khewra. Fazaldad, the Raja of Domeli was collaborating with them. Naunihal wanted to terminate the monopoly partly to drain them of a substantial source of income and partly to make it available at a lesser price. As a first step, he appointed Lal Singh as Raja of the territory but before he could take further steps, Gulab Singh engineered a revolt in Mandi to divert his attention and by the time the revolt was over, Naunihal was no more to pursue it.

It has also been noted that Naunihal had refused to confirm the dethronement of Raja Ahmed Shah of Askardu and had passed *a written order* for his reinstatement. Thus apart from the general scheme of things requiring the elimination of Ranjit's heirs to the throne one by one so as to clear the way for the accession of Hira Singh, these actions of Naunihal had advanced their need to do away with him. That "they were capable of committing the crime", is borne by the testimony of Cunningham and the further fact that Gulab Singh

1 Gardner, p. 225.
2 Chunningham, p.

"could contrive the removal of an enemy without any sort of compunction,"[1] raises a strong suspicion that the death of Naunihal may have after all, been contrived by the Dogras and that in any case, the injury may have been aggravated in the closed chamber so as to hasten his end.

THE PLUNDER OF SIKH TREASURES

Sher Singh was meanwhile summoned from his jagir in Batala. Dhian Singh espoused his cause to the throne while Gulab Singh and Hira Singh were publicly on the side of Chand Kaur. It was a part of their strategy that in all such serious disputes they took opposite sides so as to safeguard the larger interests of the family. Sher Singh had been summoned by the troops but before he could enter Lahore, they had, for the time being, changed their loyalty and he had, therefore, no option but to retire back to his jagir. Finding himself in a difficult position, Dhian Singh left for Jammu, leaving his brother and son at Lahore. A month later when Sher Singh came down to Lahore again, he managed to secure the support of the major part of the Khalsa army. Depositing Rani Chand Kaur in the fort, Gulab Singh deployed a large force drawn from his own clan, to defend it. Dhian Singh and Suchet Singh supported Sher Singh who besieged the fort for seven days, resulting in the death of some people on both sides but ultimately a compromise was worked out by the Panchas. A special feature of the Sikh rule was that each company designated a few representatives styled as Panchas whose decision in matters of disputes in the army was normally binding because the Khalsa army was on oath to maintain unity in its ranks, so that the Govt. may not go out of their hands. As the army faction supporting Sher Singh did not succeed in forcing an entry into the fort, Gulab Singh naturally exploited the situation to secure terms as favourable as he wanted. As per compromise, Sher Singh was to be acknowledged as ruler ; Chand Kaur was to vacate the fort and in lieu of the surrender of her claims to the throne, was to receive in the vicinity of Jammu a jagir carrying an annual income of rupees nine lacs. Sher Singh relinquished his claim of transferring her to his harem under the Chadar-andazi custom, but what is more important, the Dogra garrison in the fort was allowed to march out and return to Jammu without any interference at all, whatsoever. The promised jagir was given to the Rani and was administered by Gulab Singh.

The Dogras evacuated the fort purposely in the darkness of the night as they had robbed it of its treasures which were removed to Jammu. According to Smyth :

1 The Building of Jammu & Kashmir State, p. 35.

> "In preparation for this moment, Goolaub Singh employed himself in filling his tumbrels and waggons, sixteen in number, with silver money, allowing only thirty rounds of ammunition for each gun, to be used in case of emergency. Furthermore, a bag of gold mohurs was entrusted to the care of each of five hundred of his most faithful adherents ; and again, a quantity of jewellery and valuable trinkets was delivered to the charge of his own orderly Gorechars or mounted body guard. Then taking with him twelve of the best horses that had been in Runjeet Sing's stud, and many valuable articles of pushmeena, etc., Goolaub Singh at the head of his men marched quietly out of the fort after dark on the evening of the eighth day."[1]

Another contemporary, has confirmed Gulab's theft and plunder of the fort after the siege. Says he :

> "Gulab Singh laughing in his sleeves at the success of his and his brother's plans, marched off to Jammu amidst curses of the Sikh army, carrying with him a great part of the treasure, principally jewels which Maharaja Ranjit Singh had stored in the fort and which plunder, five years later, helped him to purchase Cashmere."[2]

It was not without reason that after the murder of his father, Hira Singh told the Khalsa army in a public speech :

> "The old King's coffers are yet full, but believe me, I have no occasion to resort to them ; my own, my father's, and my uncle's wealth is sufficient to keep up an army of a hundred thousand good and loyal Sikhs for a hundred years and I hereby solemnly promise that it shall all, to the last fraction, be extended on you. It is all yours and for your use. Now I here solemnly promise and if necessary will confirm my words by an oath that henceforth your pay shall be increased one-half ; each foot-soldier shall receive twelve rupees a month and every horseman one rupee a day."[3]

Jewalla Singh, the Mukhtar of Sher Singh, who quickly rose to a position of great confidence was not liked by the Dogras. Afraid of his growing influence with the Maharaja, the Dogra brothers successfully manipulated Sher Singh to believe that he was actually his enemy. He was arrested and while in jail at Lahore for a month, half a seer of flour, mixed with a considerable quantity of salt was his only diet. When

1 Smyth, p. 64.
2 Lepel Griffin, p. 20.
3 Smyth, p. 86.

he survived even this treatment, plus the conventional tortures, Dhian Singh got him transferred to Sheikhupura fort, deceptively for an internment of six months, but to die only ten days later on account of the gruesome torture to which he was subjected.

Gulab Singh having succeeded in preventing Chand Kaur from falling into the harem of Sher Singh, successfully widened the breach between them because he was afraid that if the Maharani entered his harem, she may disclose the secrets resulting from the last siege of the fort. Sher Singh again tried to get her hand but having failed, secretly ordered her female attendants to kill her while he was away at Wazirabad. The maid servants killed her by dashing out her brain with a heavy stone while engaged in dressing her hair. Instead of being rewarded as promised, the hands of two were cut off, the third escaped through the aid of a fakir and the fourth was released in consideration of paying a large amount as ransom.

THE FOX ALONE SURVIVES RETRIBUTION

Meanwhile, the Army's hatred against Dhian Singh and his family was gaining momentum. It was realised at long last that unless the family was made ineffective, the Sikhs could not enjoy peace and an orderly government. Sardars Lehna Singh and Ajit Singh of the Sandhawallia clan thereupon conspired to kill Sher Singh as well as the Dogras. They were able to put Sher Singh and Dhian Singh against one another by first conspiring with one for the destruction of the other, and then, after revealing the conspiracy to the victim on oath, jointly conspired for the destruction of the other. One day they entered Lahore with a big force and made straight for the royal mansion at Shah Balore, where Sher Singh was putting up at the time. Having disarmed him of any suspicion by engaging him to some interesting conversation, Ajit Singh, pretending innocently to be showing a newly acquired double barrelled gun of some peculiarity, requested the King for its examination and when the Maharaja stretched out his hands to receive it, it was off ! Sher Singh died on the spot. Then, after killing his eldest son, a lad of 13 or 14 years and all the women in his zenanah, they hurried to the city and coming across Dhian Singh in the way, brought him to the fort on the pretext of jointly deciding the future course of action. Dhian Singh was too shrewd to be deceived but finding himself out-numbered, he had no alternative but to accompany them to the fort in the hope of an opportunity to extricate himself out of their hands. They entered the outer gate unhindered but on the next one, most of the Minister's attendants were refused entry. Dhian Singh therefore hesitated to enter when, instantly, on a sign from Ajit Singh, two

shots were fired at him ; he fell down and died instantaneously. The only person among his attendants who offered resistance and, as a result, lost his life, was its only Muslim member.

Lehna Singh then arrived and remonstrated with Ajit Singh for his undue haste in killing Dhian Singh. His plan, he told Ajit, was to gather all the brothers as well as Hira Singh inside the fort and then kill them simultaneously. They now entered the fort and for sometime suppressed the news of the death of the Minister and sent messages to Suchet Singh and Hira Singh in the name of the murdered Minister to come to the fort but they demanded a written message in his hand.

THE IMPERISHABLE SATTI

However, the news of what had happened spread fast. The Sandhawallias committed the folly of confining themselves within the four walls of the fort while Hira Singh and Suchet Singh were free outside to incite the Khalsa army to avenge the death of Sher Singh. It was in this connection that Hira Singh made the speech already referred to above and in order to enlist the support of the Army, which might have otherwise still preferred to support Sikh leaders as against the Dogras, as a prompt inducement, raised its salary. Dhian's widow, the daughter of the Rajput chief of Pathankot, described by Gardner as being "young and exquisitively lovely", threw off her veil and appeared before the army vowing that she would not commit satti till the murder of her husband was avenged. Corrupt and highly selfish as the Khalsa army was, it at once rallied around Hira Singh, attacked the fort and over-powering its defenders, killed Ajit Singh and Lehna Singh alongwith some of their supporters.

When Ajit Singh's severed head was placed at the feet of Dhian Singh's widow, she exclaimed joyfully her instant readiness to follow her "Lord and husband" and assured her step-son, Hira Singh, whose mother died in 1832, that she would soon tell his father in the hereafter that he had acted the part of a brave and dutiful son. Followed by thirteen women, including a thirteen-year old maid-servant who insisted to die with her, the Rani walked towards the pyre with the most perfect composure, ordering her affairs, making presents and giving alms. After mounting the pyre and taking the severed head of her husband in her lap, as in all sattis, she placed the kalgi (aigrette) of her late husband in the turban of Hira Singh. Then placing herself in a reclining position with other human offerings around her, smilingly and joyfully took leave of all around and in a proud and lofty tone commanded that the pyre be lighted which soon engulfed them in flames.[1] Says Gardner :

1 Smyth, p. 92.

"Seldom, if ever, have I been so powerfully affected as at the self-immolation of the gentle and lovely girl, whose love for her husband passed all bounds."[1]

On 17th September, 1843, Dalip Singh the youngest son of Ranjit Singh, ascended the throne. Being hardly 10 years old, his mother, Rani Jindan, became Regent with Hira Singh as Minister. Soon afterwards, surfaced a clash of interests between Hira Singh and his uncle Suchet Singh, born out of their rivalry over the affections of the Rani. Suchet Singh was the first to have entered into her affections during the very life-time of Ranjit Singh. Her brother Jawahir Singh also was against the ministership of Hira Singh as well as being an enemy of Pandit Jalla, the astrologer/tutor of Hira Singh and himself an influential man at the Court since the days of Ranjit. The Pandit also had developed an amorous relationship with Rani Jindan but it appears from the writings of contemporaries that Jindan was more interested in Suchet Singh and therefore encouraged him to aspire for the ministership, promising not only her support but also that of her brother.

Rani Jindan was a woman of great charm and presence of mind. During the first Sikh war when a clamorous deputation of 500 Sikh soldiers and officers from the front was on the verge of tearing her up for failure to supply adequate rations, she took off her lengha from behind the veil, rolled it up rapidly into a ball, flung it over the heads of the angry mob and according to Gardner, shouted back :

"Wear that, you cowards ! I'll go in trousers and fight myself!" The effect was electric. After a moment's pause, during which the deputation seemed stunned, a unanimous shout arose, "Dhulip Singh Maharaj, we will go and die for your kingdom and the khalsaji !" and breaking up tumultuously and highly excited, this dangerous deputation dispersed, and rejoined the army."[2]

After it became publicly known that Pandit Jalla had "insulted" the Rani, there was a commotion in the army ; so much so that Hira Singh had to confine himself in the fort for two to three days till a temporary compromise was effected.

When news of these happenings reached Jammu to which Suchet Singh had retired, he left for Lahore with a small force in the hope of securing the Ministership. It appears that certain Sikh Sardars who had

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1 Gardner, p. 249.
2 Gardner, p. 273.

earlier invited him, changed their m'nd and on reaching Ravi, advised him to return back to Jammu for the time-being as they did not consider the time opportune. Desperate by nature as he was, he refused to go back and spent the night in a mosque. In the cover of darkness, he endeavoured his best to win over some influential Sardars and, according to Smyth, distributed over sixty thousand rupees to achieve this end. In the morning he discovered that instead of winning others, his own force had dwindled to about fifty men, the rest having deserted in the darkness of the night. Undaunted, he was still determined to enter Lahore and use his wealth as well as the influence of Rani Jindan, which he very much counted upon, to bring about a change of wazarat. At the same time, at the other end, Pandit Jalla, who was very much depended upon by Hira Singh, told him that if Suchet Singh was not killed within twenty four hours, the stars predicted his own destruction. To please the army and dissuade them from supporting Suchet Singh, they distributed to each man, a pair of bracelets costing rupees thirty.[1] He then sent, against his uncle, a force of fifteen thousand, equipped with a number of guns. Suchet Singh who has been described by Gardner as "a splendid swordsman and the very pink of chivalry", read his scriptures, prepared himself for death, called his followers around him and told them that any one who did not want to fight the losing battle, was free to go home in peace but none would, however, leave him in his last moments. They fought bravely and desperately but, as was inevitable, he died fighting in the compound of the mosque which was also destroyed by the Sikh artillery. About a hundred of the attackers were killed or wounded. Hira Singh threw himself on the dead body of his uncle with great grief.[2]

Princes Kashmira Singh and Peshawara Singh were away on their lands in Sialkot. Now it was their turn to be eliminated. A force was sent against Kashmira Singh and in the encounter that followed, the Prince who had been falsely accused of being in league with the British, was killed along-with a Sikh divine, Bhai Gurmukh Singh, who was held in high esteem by the Sikh army. On account of the divine's cold-blooded murder, the force earned the epithet of 'Gurumars'. Afraid of the consequences, Hira Singh tried to divert the attention of the army by laying claim to the estate and riches of his father and uncle. It seems to have been a pre-planned hoax because when the force employed to enforce his claim was still in the neighbourhood of Jammu, Gulab Singh offered to abide by any terms that may be settled by the claimant's younger brother, Jawahir

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1 Gardner, p. 254.
2 Gardner, p. 255.

Singh, who was sent for from Lahore. Some compromise was ostensibly agreed upon and Jawahir Singh returned to Lahore alongwith the Sikh army taking with him also Mian Sone Singh, the second son of Gulab Singh, also known as Randhir Singh.

Sometime later, Rani Jindan complained that Pandit Jalla had been 'disrespectful' towards her and also that she had been subjected to unnecessary restrictions by Hira Singh. According to Smyth, the Pandit had attempted to poison her on the pretext of administering some medicine. According to the same author, it had also become publicly known that both he and Hira Singh had been in the habit of sending for her at night. The army thereupon demanded the person of Pandit Jalla, perhaps as first instalment and Hira Singh being conscious of the danger to his own person and authority, sought to protect him through subtle methods.

In December, 1843, the situation took a serious turn. Apparently an agreement was reached with the Sardars but on the following night, Hira Singh alongwith Pandit Jalla and Sone Singh escaped with a small force because sensing great danger, he seems to have thought it prudent to keep out of Lahore—the principal seat of the army, for the time being. When the news of his escape became known in the morning, a force commanded by Meva Singh Majeethia and Mehtab Singh was despatched in their pursuit. They were overtaken about fifteen to sixteen miles from Ravi towards Gujranwala and in course of a running battle for the next nine miles, all except six private soldiers who were able to save themselves because of the swiftness of their horses, were killed. Their heads were cut off and brought to Lahore; while the head of Hira Singh was exposed at the Lohari gate and of Sone Singh at the Mori gate, that of Pandit Jalla was exhibited from house to house. Ultimately, the heads of Hira Singh and Sone Singh were thrown into a ditch outside the house of Raja Dhian Singh.

Such elements in the Khalsa army, who were inimical towards the Dogras, now had an upper hand and decided to complete the destruction of the family by capturing Jammu. A large force was sent under Lal Singh, Sham Singh, Fateh Singh Man, and Sultan Mohammad Khan. At Jasrota, the six-horse artillery guns formerly belonging to Raja Dhian Singh and then in charge of a Sikh officer, Uttar Singh, deserted the Dogras and joined the Sikhs. The Khalsa army took possession of Jasrota and Samba and advanced upon Jammu city from all sides. Finding himself in a desperate position, Gulab Singh invited army leaders to meet him to negotiate a settlement. None except Fateh Singh Man was prepared to take the risk. Accompanied by Wazir Bugenoo and one Gunpat, once a

clerk of Hira Singh, he came alongwith a small escort. Against a demand of rupees three crore, Gulab Singh agreed to pay rupees 35 lacs but actually paid rupees five lacs only and, in addition, promised to surrender the property of Dhian Singh, Suchet Singh and Hira Singh. While returning to their camp and having hardly covered a distance of a mile and a half from the place where Gulab Singh bade them good-bye, the emissaries were ambushed and except for a lone foot soldier, were killed by a band of about five hundred Dogras. The money was also carried away. Gulab Singh immediately put a few persons in jail pretending that they were his enemies and had committed the outrage in order to widen the breach between him and the Khalsa. It was, however, difficult for the Sikhs to digest it, knowing as they did, the cunning Dogra and his lust for money. So they pressed hard and crossed Tavi in three divisions. Gulab Singh then sent his nephew Jawahir Singh, rightly calculating that his appearance would generate sympathy in the general body of the army because of their general regard for his deceased father. As expected, the Prince did evoke sympathy and after a conference with the Sardars, returned to his uncle alongwith some Panchas, ostensibly to continue negotiations but actually to give him the desired opportunity of winning them over. A past master in the art and with countless treasures at his disposal, this he easily accomplished. After a few days negotiations, by which time a section of the Khalsa army and their Sardars had been won over through bribe and lavish promises, Gulab Singh himself appeared before the Khalsa army and this is what, according to Smyth, he told them:—

> "......he and his family were, as they ever had been, the creatures and slaves of the Khalsa, and that nothing should induce him to raise his hand against them. He declared, too, that though he might appear grasping and cruel in the extortion of money, it must be remembered that he sought to amass wealth only for the service of the Khalsa. He added another and a more powerful appeal to their forbearance, when he told them that he was the last of his family who knew where vast treasures of his house lay hid, and that if he were put to death, this secret would die with him. To enforce and illustrate this declaration, he would direct the Seiks to repair to certain places around Jummoo, where, by attending to the marks and signs which he gave them, they found large sums of buried money, fifteen, twenty, and even forty thousand rupees in one place, and which but for Goolaub's disclosure, might have lain hid for ever. It was thus that the Rajah gained the title which the soldiers bestowed on him of the Sona Ka Kookooree, or the Golden Hen. By such means, by flattering speeches, by promises and bribes, Goolaub Singh entirely

bought over the troops to his interest, without troubling himself about the views or opinions of their leaders. The terms he offered did not satisfy the chiefs, but they pleased the soldiers, and that was all the Rajah cared for. These terms were that each man of the entire Seikh army should receive a gold bangle or armlet and twenty-five rupees in cash. The first object of this offer was to attach to the interests of the Rajah, the four battalions of Avitabile's division, the Povindea division, and that of General Court, and not only to ensure his personal safety and respect, but that if he went with them to Lahore, his rank and power should be upheld, and that he should be made Wuzeer."[1]

According to Hashmatullah, Gulab Singh also bribed Sardar Meva Singh with a sum of rupees twenty-five thousand and a fine horse.[2] The Khalsa army was, therefore, largely won over, and returned to Lahore alongwith Gulab Singh where it got divided into two camps. While Meva Singh and his supporters, numbering twenty thousand men and fifty pieces of artillery, stood by their promise and supported Gulab Singh, those led by Lal Singh supported the Government. Ultimately Gulab Singh was taken a prisoner and placed in the Haveli of Naunihal Singh under a strong guard. Only Diwan Jawala Sahai among his attendants had permission to see him. By this time, Jawahir Singh, the defacto Prime Minister since the death of Hira Singh, had been confirmed in this position. Frightened by the prospect of an inveterate foe being in saddle, Gulab Singh now made frantic efforts, through Jawala Sahai, to effect a reapproachment with the Durbar. It was, therefore, mutually agreed that he should pay the State rupees sixty-eight lacs and give up the territories that belonged to his brother Suchet Singh and his nephew Hira Singh.[3] Consequently, Bhimber and Manawar were taken away from him and conferred upon Chittar Singh Attariwalla. It also seems to have been agreed upon that the payment was to be made in certain instalments. He was, therefore, released on payment of the first instalment. He, however, chose to remain in Lahore, perhaps to see whether and how he could contrive the removal of Jawahir Singh and get himself planted in his place. As the prospects appeared dim and his personal safety also appeared to be in danger, he returned to Jammu after an absence of four months.

While Gulab Singh was interned in Lahore, his authority was challenged almost everywhere. In Kishtwar, one Bikram zamindar of Kastigarh assisted by Yusuf Khan Munshi, supported Dilawar,

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1 Smyth, p. 145.
2 Hashmatullah, p. 47.
3 Smyth, p. 150.

the son of the last Raja, Mohammad Teg and put an end to the Dogra rule. Lala Sarb Dayal and Mutasadi Padhiyar, the representatives of Gulab Singh, had to take refuge in the Dodah fort and remained besieged until relieved by the arrival of a large force from Jammu under the command of Wazir Lakhpat. Wazir Nehal Singh, an ex-employee of Suchet Singh, assisted by Mian Bachatar Singh Kanha-Chakia, a Sikh Sardar, captured Ramnagar. At some places in Poonch and Kahuta, the local inhabitants rose in revolt and liberated a part of the territory. Mian Hattu, the Dogra representative in Kahuta, had to take refuge in the Ramkot fort. Similarly in Mirpur there was a local uprising and the Dogra representative, Rai Dhanpat, took refuge in the Mangla fort.

Among the reputed sons of Ranjit Singh, now remained only Peshawara Singh, besides the minor Dalip. It is said that, on instigation from Gulab Singh, he captured Attock, as a first step, to press his claim to the throne. This alarmed Jawahir Singh, who sent a force against him. There was no bloodshed as the Prince was invited to Lahore, and promised not only personal safety but also proper respect which was his due as a son of Ranjit. The in-experienced youth—none of Ranjit's sons were properly groomed to take over the mantle of kingship—fell an easy prey and accompanied them to Hassan-abdal on way to Lahore. At night, after his personal guard had been killed, he was arrested and taken back to Attock where he was strangulated and the corpse thrown into Indus. The news of the wicked drama sent a wave of indignation throughout the Sikh camp at Lahore; holding Jawahir Singh responsible for the murder of the last major descendant of Ranjit, the Army killed him in a swift action.

An interesting event of this period is the rise of a slave girl Mangla, the daughter of a water-carrier-cum-wood-cutter from Kangra who became a favourite of both Rani Jindan as well as Lal Singh and is, largely unearnedly, credited with having been practically the ruler of the Sikh kingdom at the time. The degradation of the court and the inefficiency of the army can be illustrated by the fact that one of her brothers, a young lad who had been, in his childhood, hypothecated to a khatri in lieu of a debt, and whose release was years later secured by his sister, was appointed a General of the Artillery.[1] After the British annexation of Punjab, Mangla went to England, perhaps with the retinue of Rani Jindan and already on the wrong side of forty, ended up as a chamber-maid of Queen Victoria.

1 Smyth, p. 176

This is how we arrive in the fateful year 1846. Rani Jindan was deeply hurt by the murder of her brother and allegedly harboured deep hatred against the army. There was no one among the Sikhs capable of forging unity in the ranks of the Khalsa or to control the turbulent, corrupt and highly indisciplined army. It was under these circumstances that the first Sikh war broke out. After a few skirmishes here and there, the Sikhs were defeated at Sabraon, resulting in the treaty of Lahore and the consequent sale of Kashmir.

On the accession of Dalip Singh, a minor, with her mother Jindan, saddled as Regent, and almost everyone of importance dying to become her lover, the Company Sarkar seems to have thought the time opportune for securing a strong foothold at Lahore as a spring-board for its long-dreamt annexation. It is unfortunately the way of history, generally, to condemn the loser and absolve the victor of his part of the blame. It was, therefore, in the nature of things that Rani Jindan should have been visited with the responsibility of forcing the first Sikh war on the British in order to destroy the Khalsa army, she dreaded. It is no doubt true that Jindan was afraid of the army; it is equally true that with the death of Sher Singh, there was really no one in the Sikh camp who had the capacity to unify the warring elements and command their confidence, but it is unfair to accuse a lady who was as intelligent as many a successful queens and especially one who had an alert mind as shown earlier, of having dramatically marched back a horde of 500 specially chosen officers and men who were practically on the verge of cutting her to pieces, to have sought the destruction of the very base that provided her power and prestige. She observed purdah and the advisers, with whom she conversed, were limited in number. Unlike Razia Sultana or Chand Bibi, she was no soldier herself and it is, therefore, all the more, unfair to hold her responsible for the destruction of the Sikh kingdom. The war, as Cunningham convincingly argues, was thrust on the Sikhs by the Governor-General because he could not countenance the existence of a strong native State. It was with this end in view that the British wanted to neutralize Gulab Singh so as to deprive his Sovereign of his immense resources in men and material while on his part, Gulab Singh was equally anxious to win their friendship by all means in order to get confirmed in his possessions and, further, to secure the beautiful Valley of Kashmir.

دونوں طرف تھی آگ برابر لگی ہوئی

THE ANGLO-DOGRA HANDSHAKE

On his frequent visits to Kashmir valley, Gulab Singh seems to have taken note, not only of the beauty and splendour of its Nature, but what is

more important, of the natural wealth of the territory and the opportunity it provided an avaricious man like him to get richer. He, therefore, had his greedy eyes fixed on the territory long before the treaty of Amritsar. He had an additional reason: it was its location, being between his Jammu possessions on the one end and the northern regions, on the other. He must have also found by experience that the most convenient route to northern regions lay, not through the difficult passes via Kishtwar, but from Srinagar through Sonamarg and Bandipura.

Any shrewd observer of contemporary history could have easily detected his longing to secure Kashmir. The fact that its sale to Gulab Singh was not a sudden accident and that it was the culmination of a policy, long pursued, is evident from the following observations of Vigne who visited Srinagar in 1838 and who was well-informed on the subject:—

> "But his chief object was to further his designs upon Kashmir, which he and his brothers have been constantly endeavouring to obtain possession of, by every means in their power; and when I finally quitted the valley on the 21st of December, 1838, the Maharajah appeared to have retained little for himself excepting the shawl duty, and Gulab Singh had, I believe, his revenue officers in the city, at Shupeyon and Islamabad."[1]

Yet another foreign visitor to Srinagar, when Ghulam Mohi-ud-Din was its Governor, testifies:

> "Gulab Singh is sensible enough not to see to extend his power in a direction where he may lose all; he wishes for the mountain districts and for Kashmir; he could then laugh at the masters of the lower provinces. He wishes to avoid coming in contact with the English power and looks northward towards Tibet and Chinese Tartary where he thinks he could extend his conquests without dread of European interference. *He would sell the Punjab ten times over to the English to serve his own purpose.*"[2]

With this end in view, Gulab Singh cleverly proceeded to chalk out his plan. As a really shrewd actor of the political drama that was being enacted in the Punjab, he could easily predict the not-too-distant destruction of the Sikh State after the death of Ranjit Singh. He could also easily predict the extension of British rule in the territories

1 Vigne, p. 218.
2 Schonberg, p. 30.

ruled by the Sikhs. State secrets were no secrets for him partly because of his own position but mainly because of the important offices held by his brothers and the special position enjoyed by his nephew in the inner chambers of the palace. He had, therefore, known that despite Ranjit's great desire to extend his rule beyond Sutlej, he dare not cross the river for fear of British hostility. He must have also known, that despite being ardently desirous of over-running Sind, Ranjit dare not do so although it had not as yet been annexed by the British and, therefore, conceding the superiority of the latter and their paramount interest, sought their permission for the venture which being refused, he had to kill his ambition. Gulab Singh, therefore, saw the importance of cultivating British friendship as a valuable investment.

It was equally in the interests of the British to welcome his initiative on account of the importance of the family at the Lahore court. The English race of the 19th century produced a number of really extraordinary men, of great wisdom, endurance and foresight and it is to them that Britain owes the founding of an empire, the like of which is without a parallel in the history of the Planet.

Acting on the famous saying that blood is thicker than water, Gulab Singh rightly thought that the best way to influence the English court at Calcutta was by using its own men, both as a channel of communication as well as friends and supporters.

He succeeded, according to Bamzai, in cultivating the friendship of important English officers like Henry John Lawrence, Captain Abbott, Mr. (later Sir) George Clerck, Captain Nicholson, John Hardinge and Edward Lake. Important officials, they were principally concerned with the formation of the British policy in the Punjab and Frontier. Some of them were very close to the Governor-General and among them especially was H. M. Lawrence, whom Gulab Singh had taken particular care to befriend to an extent as to have succeeded in identifying him with his own cause. Victor Jacquemont who visited the State in about 1829 and travelled via Kotli, had certain complaints against the local administrator Nihal Singh. Gulab Singh ordered his imprisonment and sent a Wazir with a palanquin, a body of soldiers, servants and supplies to Rajouri, while his eldest son met him at Jammu and took off his shoes at the entrance of his (Jacquemont's) tent."[1] A British Political officer was attached with his troops even during the life-time of Ranjit. He appointed Alexander Gardner as his representative and factotum at Lahore. Another English officer in his service was Col. Stienbach.[2]

1 Jacquemont, p. 254.
2 Gardner, p. 243.

There is evidence that even as early as 1842, Gulab Singh had secret contacts with his eventual benefactor, Lawrence. Sher Singh had ordered him to proceed to Peshawar but unwilling to obey, Gulab encamped on this side of Indus, pretending inability to advance further while at the same time being secretly in communication with Mohammad Akbar Khan, son of Dost Mohammad Khan of Kabul. It was here that Lawrence appeared in his camp in the garb of a Pathan and had several meetings with him. Says Gardner:—

> "That astute chief at once ordered large tents to be prepared for the British official, gave him a warm reception, and declared that he had written at least five times a day, and that his notes must have been intercepted. Lawrence was then closeted for two hours with Gulab Singh, and I could see at once on the close of the interview that the wonderful tact of the rising "political" (Lawrence) had prevailed, and that he was master of the situation."[1]

It was, therefore, not without reason that on 8th April, 1842, almost four years before the first Sikh war, Mr. Clerck, the British Agent at Lahore, addressed the following letter to Raja Gulab Singh:

> "We heard from the Chiefs of our army how wisely you planned for the help of our troops and how kindly you rendered this to them.... *The fruit of the long-sown seed of friendship between us which was concealed for a long time* has now come to light......You who are the flower of the garden of this world......*the most delicious fruit of the tree of hope*, we remember your troubles and difficulties in rendering help to our army; *we shall never forget that*."[2]

The basis of friendship between Henry Lawrence and Gulab Singh was thus well and truly laid.

It may be recalled here, as already stated elsewhere, that before launching his invasion of Ladakh, Gulab Singh secured the permission not only of Ranjit Singh, who was his Sovereign but also of the British Government. That the permission was not only sought but was readily available, also shows that even as early as 1834 Gulab Singh and the East India Company had established a firm but secret friendship and were aiding one another in the execution of their complimentary schemes.

The next step was the installation of a confident at Srinagar after the Sikh soldiers mutiny, in the person of Sheikh Ghulam Mohi-ud-Din.

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1 Gardner, p. 243. 2 Panikkar, p. 55.

A native of Jullundhur, he had risen to be the Governor of Doaba but had soon fallen into disgrace. After the Sikh soldiers mutiny, which had the active support of local Muslims, the Sikh Durbar decided to appoint a Muslim as Governor. There were many Muslims at the Court with greater services to the Sikh dynasty but the Dogras succeeded in securing his appointment partly because he was in their confidence but largely because a man, brought to great light from oblivion, was naturally expected to be more grateful to the man who espoused his cause than the Court on whose behalf he nominally held the post. It was Gulab Singh's misfortune that he died before the Treaty of Amritsar and was succeeded by his son, Imam-ud-Din, a nominee of Lal Singh, an inveterate enemy of the Dogras.

That Gulab Singh was in secret alliance with the British against the Sikh Kingdom, is also proved from the following letter written by Broadfoot to Currie on 16th January, 1845:

> "In the hills Raja Gulab Singh continues to make in public abject professions of submission to the Durbar and of being broken-hearted, and desires only of dying in peace, but he is preparing with unwearied energy for war and is stirring up every enemy to the Sikhs and every ally to himself that his messengers can reach. His intrigues also are incessant at the Durbar with Peshora Singh, and with the army on this side of Sutlej, and day after day, his agents offer and receive fresh terms of submission which are duly discussed by the Council."[1]

Gulab Singh's agent Sheo Dutt met Mr. Broadfoot in August, 1845 and informed him that "he (Gulab Singh) would at once cause the whole of them (the hillmen) to revolt against the Sikhs and submit to the British or, if desired, he could besides assemble 40,000 troops from the hills, probably 50,000, but certainly 40,000 and more and attack the Sikhs."[2]

As early as January, 1846, Gulab Singh had sent his agents to Ludhiana to negotiate terms for his assistance to the British. One of his emissaries was a Bengali physician, Bansi Dhar Ghosh who delivered a letter from him to Lieutenant E. Lake, Assistant Agent to the Governor-General, on 15th January, 1846. The letter said:

> "He who wishes to climb the summit of a lofty mountain, must start at day-break; should he delay, night may close over him ere he has gained the desire of his heart; the treasure which is buried in the depth

1&2 Khushwant Singh, p. 37.

of the mountain will become the prize of that man who is the first to reach its summit."[1]

It clearly meant that the British should take the initiative for a war against the Sikhs. In early February, 1846, Gulab Singh sent another agent to Major Henry Lawrence who had taken over the Governor's Agency from Broadfoot. Says Khushwant Singh:

"It seems clear that an understanding was reached between the British and Gulab Singh before the battle of Sabroan. As stated in his letter of February 19, 1846 to the Secret Committee, Hardinge gave Gulab Singh an assurance that his interests would be given full consideration. According to the editors of the 1955 edition of Cunningham's History of the Sikhs (p. 279), it was chiefly the disclosure of the communication between Hardinge and Gulab Singh which led to Cunningham's reversion from the political service to the army."[2]

It is, therefore, evident that Gulab Singh was bent upon treachery even to the extent of fighting on the side of the British with an army of at least 40,000 men but the opportunity that came his way, either through an accident of fate or the machinations of the British who had already won over some leading courtiers like Teja Singh, by being appointed Wazir of the Sikh Kingdom, suited the conspirators better because, as happened, it enabled him to sabotage Sikh interests from within and thus he proved far more useful to the British in his capacity as Wazir than he might have been as an ally in the battle-field.

Before the outbreak of the first Sikh war in 1846, he was repeatedly requested, by the Durbar, to reach Lahore alongwith his forces but on one pretext or other he delayed his departure and at the same time, neither declining to come. Getting disgusted, Rani Jindan then desired him to take up the Ministership of the kingdom, hoping thereby to enlist the support of his well-equipped and large forces against the British. The intervening period spread over four months was utilized by him in advising the Sikhs not to move against the British till his arrival, a step taken obviously at the instance of the latter, so as to afford them sufficient time for preparation. The Durbar, unaware of the treacherous implications, acted on his advice. This is what Mr. Smyth has to say about Gulab Singh's "masterly inactivity":—

"This chief had, on the first outbreak of hostilities, been summoned

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1 Khushwant, V. II, p. 55.
2 *Ibid.*, p. 55.

from Jummoo, whence he had come with no great alacrity. He made, however, a great show and many promises of assistance, which were never to be realised. At length he reached Lahore, with about three thousand men and large quantities of supplies; but though his troops were sent forward to join the army, he himself remained at the capital, on various pretences, for some time. He was now surrounded by about five hundred Punches, who spoke of making him Wuzeer, and of carrying him to the camp to lead the army against the British. He, however, evaded compliance with their wishes (to lead the army: author) making them satisfied for a while longer with promises and professions. He would, he said, shortly proceed to take the command of the army on the banks of the Sutlej, and he urged the necessity of abstaining from an attack upon the British until he should have placed himself at the head of the troops. But, as possibly may have been anticipated by the sagacious chief of Jummoo, ere his time for taking the command arrived, the British had acquired strength sufficient to become the attacking party instead of waiting to be attacked."[1]

Says Col. Gardner, later C-in-C of the Dogra army:

"Meanwhile Gulab Singh cajoled the whole of the leading panchas of the Sikh army, affecting to see every visitor from the battle at any moment, whether he was bathing or eating, as if his whole heart was with the Sikhs. He got all the wheat-carriers in the country, loaded them with immense display, with about one-fourth of what they could carry, put placards in "Gurmukhi" on their necks to the effect that they were carrying supplies from Gulab Singh, and told them, under pain of mutilation, not to go two abreast, in order that the army and the country might imagine that incessant and enormous supplies were being forwarded to the stalwart and devoted Khalsa by their loyal and affectionate friend. "I'm not going empty-handed to the great campaign that is to end at Calcutta," gave out Gulab Singh. "When all is ready for campaigning, off I start. This will be a long war," said he. "It's a race to the capital and devil catch the hindmost." Thus he temporised."[2]

When, at last, Gulab Singh came to Lahore in January, 1846, he was received at Ravi by Bhai Ram Singh and Raja Dina Nath on behalf of the Court. Rani Jindan conferred the Ministership upon him and commissioned him to continue the war but instead of either pursuing the war

1 Smyth, p. 189.
2 Gardner, p. 269-70.

vigorously or even advising against such a course, he used his position to delay the collection of the forces, impede the supply of arms, ammunition and food and worst of all, play the Sardars against one another while, at the same time, holding secret parleys with the British as to how they intended to reward him for his treachery of his masters and benefactors. Admits Mr. Panikkar:

> "There is, therefore, prima facie case for the belief that Gulab Singh had already agreed with the British authorities that he would remain neutral in the conflict."[1]

Neutrality, for the Prime Minister of a country at war! Unheard of! Only a Maratha sociologist, could have the 'courage' to say so.

Writes yet another contemporary:

> "Gulab Singh urged the army not to attempt attacking the British until he joined them, and this he evaded doing on one pretext or another, *knowing full well* that in due time the British would attack and capture the position at Sabraon."[2]

The battle of Sabraon known as the First Sikh War, was fought on 10th February, 1846. That Gulab Singh and the British were even before the fateful battle, busy in the dismemberment of the Khalsa kingdom by dividing its major part among themselves, is also borne out from official record. According to Lord Hardinge, the Governor-General, vide his letter to Lord Ellenborough, to explain the sale of Kashmir, Major Lawrence had as early as 3rd February, 1846, in a written communication, assured Gulab Singh that "he appreciated his wisdom in not taking up arms against us and that his interests would be taken into consideration". A few days before the battle of Sabraon, some Sikh soldiers under the command of one Najohad Singh arrested 19 white soldiers and brought them to Lahore as captives. Gulab Singh released them forthwith and sent them back to the British camp together with a letter of apology.[3] One can imagine the shattering blow it must have inflicted on the Sikh army's morale.

On 11th February, 1846, the following letter was sent to him by Sir Henry Montgomery Lawrence, whose friendship with the Raja, according to Mr. Panikkar, was well-known:

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1 Panikkar, p. 109.
2 Edwards, p.
3 Hashmatullah, p. 55.

"Kind Rajah Sahib and Dear Friend,

Please accept my best wishes and kindest regards, I received your kind letter. Let me explain the matter to you. I appreciate all that you have written wisely and prudently. Although it is difficult to know the rebels and non-rebels, the British Government wants to show forbearance to the Lahore Durbar. The Government does not at all feel happy at the anarchy and misgovernment of the Lahore State. The intention of the Company is only to punish the rebels so that in future there should be no misdeeds. I have explained the situation to Anant Ram, who will himself relate it to you. In case of delay matters will grow worse. You know that every time the Sikhs encountered the British, they were defeated. If even now they are left unpunished, and there be any such trouble again, it will then be worse for the Durbar of Lahore. You will, I believe, know from this letter that, inspite of all that has occurred, we have still the same feeling and sympathy for the Lahore Durbar. *I hope you will always favour me with your kind letters and friendly communications.*"[1]

According to Mr. Panikkar:

"This communication was a diplomatic one, meant to secure Gulab Singh of the personal friendship of the British Government without committing the authorities to any proposal beyond that of sympathy to the Lahore Durbar. *But other questions were being discussed behind the scenes with a view to securing the co-operation of Gulab Singh, as will be evident from the letter written two days later by Sir Henry Lawrence* (13th February, 1846)."[2]

Recalling again that the battle of Sabraon was fought on 10th February and the Treaty of Lahore was signed on 9th March, the following communication from Henry should be enough to prove his treacherous attitude towards a Court, whose interest, as its Negotiator and Minister, he was legally and morally duty-bound to safeguard. It also establishes beyond any doubt, his being in secret alliance with the British, whose aim was the destruction of the Khalsa Kingdom while his own was not only to get confirmed in the territory administered by him for the Sikhs but also the acquisition of the famous Kashmir Valley.

"KIND RAJAH SAHIB AND DEAR FRIEND,

Receive my regards and let it be known to you that *I want to say to you a word which will be to your utmost good. So I hope you may manage to*

1&2 Panikkar, p. 94, 95.

hear it from me personally. Do this please, and do this without delay. I hope you will remember me with your friendly letter."[1]

When Gulab Singh met Sir Henry as desired, he was told, according to Mr. Panikkar :

> "that the Governor-General had promised to grant him the hilly district, together with the country of Kashmir, *after having separated them from the Government of the Punjab*, and that Gulab Singh would be recognised as an independent ruler."[2]

On account of the extremely reckless nature of the very transaction, unexpected from the representatives of a Government like the British, Gulab Singh could hardly believe that his good English friends had succeeded in selling the idea to the Governor-General; he, therefore, sought and was granted, an interview with the latter, then encamped at Kasur and it was only after getting confirmation from the highest representative of Her Majesty, that a few days later he presented Dalip Singh to Lord Hardinge as a customary demonstration of submission.

It is quite evident that Gulab Singh used his position as Negotiator and Minister of the Sikh Court not only to the detriment of his employers but also to his own personal advantage and the Governor-General, encircled as he was by officers, if not in the pay, at least in close friendship with Gulab Singh, was prevailed upon, on the strength of flimsy grounds, to allow him the desire of his heart. The settlement arrived at between them was tne transfer of Doab to the British in perpetuity; payment of rupees fifty lakhs in cash as war indemnity and the transfer of the hilly territories to the British in lieu of the war indemnity of rupees one crore which was to be made over to Gulab Singh.

1&2 Panikkar, p. 95.

CHAPTER INDEX

THE SALE OF KASHMIR

CHAPTER V

دهقان و کشت و جوئے و خیابان فروختند
قومے فروختند و چہ ارزاں فروختند

The East India Company, being essentially a trading company, had, in all its doings, the acquisition of money as one of its principal goals. So Gulab Singh, already clamouring for his "pound of flesh" in the treaty negotiations, as a reward for his services, had his opportunity.

Says Mr. Lepel Griffin :

> "His brother Gulab Singh was generally employed on military duties but after the death of the Maharaja and the murder of his brother Dhayan Singh, he became for a time the most important person in the Lahore State, and his services to the British during the first Sutlej campaign were such that he was granted the independent sovereignty of the province of Kashmir."[1]

On his part, the Governor-General also wanted to satisfy the demands of the Directors at home; the Sikh treasury was empty, having been emptied mainly by the theft that Gulab Singh committed a few years earlier, as already detailed elsewhere, and whatever little was left outside the fort, was consumed by the army and the administration. Therefore, it seems to have been secretly agreed upon between the Governor-General and Gulab Singh to transfer Jammu, Kashmir, Ladakh and Hazara etc. to the latter for a sum of rupees one crore.

It was also provided in the treaty of Lahore signed on 9th March, 1846, vide clause 12, that this territory shall be transferred by the British

1 Griffin.

to Maharaja Gulab Singh, ironically, for the "loyalty of the Raja towards the Lahore Durbar" through a separate treaty. That this clause, the unkindest of all, was inserted against the clear wishes of Rani Jindan and her advisers, is quite evident from the fact that when she came to know about it, before the signing of the subsequent treaty at Amritsar, she sent Raja Dina Nath and Faqir Noor-ud-Din to Henry Montgomery Lawrence and Frederick Currie conveying her total opposition to the proposed transfer and threatening that if, contrary to her wishes, the same was transferred to him, she would go to England and present a petition to the Queen.[1] If clause 12 of the treaty had been incorporated with the consent of the Rani, who alone as guardian of her minor son and as Regent of Punjab, had the constitutional prerogative of war, peace and treaties, she certainly would not have made such a representation.

THE SALE DEED

The infamous treaty, rightly condemned as the "Sale-deed" of Kashmir, signed at Amritsar on 16th March, 1846, by Mr. F. Currie and Brevet-Major Henry Montgomery Lawrence on behalf of Lord Hardinge and Gulab Singh in person is reproduced below :

> "Treaty between the British Government on the one part and Maharajah Gulab Singh of Jammu on the other, concluded on the part of the British Government by Frederick Currie, Esquire, and Brevet-Major Henry Montgomery Lawrence, acting under the orders of the Right Honourable Sir Henry Hardinge, G.C.B., one of Her Britannic Majesty's most honourable Privy Council, Governor-General of the possessions of the East India Company, to direct and control all their affair in the East Indies and by Maharajah Gulab Singh in person."

ARTICLE I

The British Government transfers and makes over for ever in independent possession to Maharajah Gulab Singh and the heirs male of his body all the hilly or mountainous country with its dependencies situated to the eastward of the River Ravi including Chamba and excluding Lahul, being part of the territories ceded to the British Government by the Lahore State according to the provision of Article IV of the Treaty of Lahore, dated 9th March, 1846.

ARTICLE 2

The eastern boundary of the tract transferred by the foregoing article to Maharajah Gulab Singh shall be laid down by the Commissioners

1 Hashmatullah, p. 57.

appointed by the British Government and Maharajah Gulab Singh respectively for the purpose and shall be defined in a separate agreement after survey.

ARTICLE 3

In consideration of the transfer made to him and his heirs by the provisions of the foregoing article, Maharajah Gulab Singh will pay to the British Government the sum of seventy-five lakhs of rupees (Nanukshahee), fifty lakhs to be paid on ratification of this Treaty and twenty-five lakhs on or before the 1st of October of the current year, A.D. 1846.

ARTICLE 4

The limits of the territories of Maharajah Gulab Singh shall not be at any time changed without concurrence of the British Government.

ARTICLE 5

Maharajah Gulab Singh will refer to the arbitration of the British Government any disputes or question that may arise between himself and the Government of Lahore or any other neighbouring State, and will abide by the decisions of the British Government.

ARTICLE 6

Maharajah Gulab Singh engages for himself and heirs to join, with the whole of his Military forces, the British troops, when employed within the hills or in the territories adjoining his possessions.

ARTICLE 7

Maharajah Gulab Singh engages never to take or retain in his service any British subject nor the subject of any European or American State without the consent of the British Government.

ARTICLE 8

Maharajah Gulab Singh engages to respect in regard to the territory transferred to him, the provisions of articles V, VI and VII of the separate Engagement between the British Government and the Lahore Durbar, dated 11th March, 1846.

"Referring to Jagirdars, arrears of revenue and property in the forts that are to be transferred".

ARTICLE 9

The British Government will give its aid to Maharajah Gulab Singh in protecting his territories from external enemies.

ARTICLE 10

Maharajah Gulab Singh acknowledges the supremacy of the British Government and will, in token of such supremacy, present annually to the British Government one horse, twelve (shawl) goats of approved breed (six male and six female) and three pairs of Cashmere shawls.

This Treaty of ten articles has been this day settled by Frederic Currie, Esquire, and Brevet-Major Henry Montgomery Lawrence, acting under directions of the Right Honourable Sir Henry Hardinge, G.C.P., Governor-General, on the part of the British Government and by Maharajah Gulab Singh in person, and the said Treaty has been this day ratified by the seal of the Right Honourable Sir Henry Hardinge, G.C.B., Governor-General.

(Done at Amritsar the sixteenth day of March, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and forty-six, corresponding with the seventeenth day of Rubbe-ul-Awal 1262 Hijree).

Signed H. Hardinge (SEAL)

Signed F. Currie
Signed H.M. Lawrence

By order of the Right Honourable the Governor-General of India.

Signed F. Currie
Secretary to the Government of India,
with the Governor-General".

J.D. Cunningham records :

"On this occasion, 'Maharaja' Gulab Singh stood up and with joined hands, expressed his gratitude to the British Viceroy,............ adding, however, without any ironical meaning, that he was indeed his 'zur-khureed' or gold-boughten, slave."

On 13th March, 1884, it was arranged by mutual consent that in future the Maharaja shall present, instead of 12 goats etc., 10 lbs of pashm in its natural

state as brought to Kashmir from Leh, 4 lbs of picked and assorted black wool, 4 lbs. grey wool, 4 lbs. white wool and 1 lb. each of the three best qualities of white yarn.

There is no doubt and it must be conceded that in Britain powerful voices were raised both in and outside the House of Commons against this atrocious sale of the people of Kashmir as they felt a sense of outrage but as usually happens, it is essentially human for everyone to defend his actions, regardless of being right or wrong. The Governor-General Lord Hardinge was no exception. A man, who had so conveniently agreed to the sale of a people described by United Nations Mediator, Justice Dixon, as "a people of song and story," for a small amount of rupees seventy five lacs, could not be expected to rise or think above the level of an average man of his age. He could easily foresee the uproar at home and, therefore, in anticipation sought to justify his action, in three communications. Of these, two are being reproduced here to show not only the hollowness of the arguments advanced and the unreality of the justification pleaded but also that he wrote conflicting and contradictory letters which at least show that he was not free from personal blame. In fact, the spirited defence put forward by him of a man like Gulab Singh, described by one of his own detached countrymen as "a monster of inequity", shows that the Raja, who, according to Mr. Panikkar, was trained "in a hard school where lying, intrigue and treachery were all considered part and parcel of politics", and who, as his past history has shown, resorted to the use of money every time his interests were in danger or he had some interest to advance, may have, after all, used money in winning over at least some of the representatives of the Great Queen Victoria.

HARDINGE EXPLAINS

As the man responsible for the unprecedented sale of such a vast number of people with at least a three thousand years old history and one who stands universally condemned in Kashmir as a vendor of human flesh, it is historically important to reproduce the letters he wrote to the Secret Committee and Lord Ellenborough, the then First Lord of the Admiralty and himself a former Governor-General of India, so as to know what he has to say in his defence. The one reproduced below is addressed to the Secret Committee Overseas Dominions and is dated 14th March, which means after the signing of the Lahore Treaty but two days before the signing of the Amritsar treaty:

"It will be seen by the draft of Treaty now forwarded that, in consequence of the inability of the Lahore Government to pay the stipulated indemnification for the expenses of the war, or to give

sufficient security for its eventual disbursement, the Hill territories, from the Beas River to the Indus, including the provinces of Kashmir and Hazarah, have been ceded to the British Government.

It is not my intention to take possession of the whole of this country. Its occupation by us would be, on many accounts, disadvantageous. It would bring us into collision with many powerful chiefs, for whose coercion a large military establishment at a great distance from our provinces and military resources would be necessary. It would more than double the extent of our present frontier in countries assailable at every point, and most difficult to defend without any corresponding advantages for such large additions of territory. How distant and conflicting interests would be created and races of people, with whom we have hitherto had no intercourse, would be brought under our rule, while the territories, excepting Kashmir, are comparatively unproductive, and would scarcely pay the expenses of occupation and management.

On the other hand, the tract now ceded includes the whole of the Hill possessions of Rajah Gulab Singh and the Jammu family. *Its possession by us enables us at once to mark our sense of Rajah Gulab Singh's conduct during the late operations, by rewarding him in the mode most in accordance with his desires, to show forth as an example to the other chiefs of Asia the benefits which accrue from an adherence to British interests, and to meet the expenses of the campaign, which we declared our determination to exact, and which, excepting by the cession of territory, the lahore Government is not in a condition to afford.*

Rajah Gulab Singh has engaged to pay the crore of rupees demanded from the Lahore State, on being put by us in possession of the territory ceded by the 4th Article of the draft Treaty, on such terms and conditions as we may approve.

It is highly expedient that the trans-Beas portion of Kulu and Mandi, with the more fertile district and strong position of the Nurpur and the celebrated fort Kangra—the key of the Himalayas in native estimation—with its district and dependencies, between the Beas and Chukkee Rivers, and their occupation by us will be attended with little cost and great advantage. The Chukkee River in the Hills will here-after be our boundary to its source and thence a line drawn to the Ravee River, and along its course, and across the Chenab to the snowy ridge on the confines of Lahool. This line will be laid down by officers sent for the purpose according to mutual agreement and will be accurately surveyed.

In consideration of the retention by us of the tract above described, a remission of twenty-five lakhs from the crore of rupees, which Rajah Gulab Singh would otherwise have paid, will be allowed, *and the Rajah will pay the remaining seventy five lakhs, of which fifty lakhs are to be made good at once, upon the ratification of the Treaty and the remaining twenty five lakhs within* six months from that date.

Of the remaining portion of the territory ceded by Article 4 of the draft Treaty, the greater part, with the exception of the Provinces of Kashmir and Hazarah, is already in the possession of Rajah Gulab Singh and his family, for which he had been bound hitherto to render military service to a small extent to the Lahore Government and to present annually a horse, with gold trappings, as a heriot to the State.

The conditions which may be stipulated with Rajah Gulab Singh and the Treaty to which he may be admitted, will be reported in my next letter. Those conditions will be so drawn as to bind us to the least possible interference in his affairs, consistently with the maintenance of our paramount position over the Rajah and his country."[1]

In answer to criticism that he had rewarded Gulab Singh for his treachery, Lord Hardinge wrote to Lord Ellenborough in justification of his action :

"*Gulab Singh was never minister of Lahore for the administration of its affairs.* Early in 1845, Jowahir Singh persuaded the army to march against Jammu. Gulab Singh, despairing of being able to defend himself, threw himself into the hands of the Panchayats, and was brought a prisoner to Lahore. He was there treated with great severity; *and subsequently, when the army offered him the Wazirship, he repeatedly declined the offer. When the invasion took place he remained at Jammu and took no part against us, but tendered his allegiance on condition of being confirmed in the position of his own territories.* This was neither conceded nor refused, as the Paramount Power did not think it becoming, while the armies were in presence of each other, to show any doubt as to the result by granting terms. I merely referred him to the terms of the Proclamation of December, when the Sikhs crossed Sutlej. Nevertheless, it was clearly to be understood by the terms of that Proclamation that if Gulab Singh took no part against us he was entitled to consideration whenever

1 Panikkar, p. 161.

the affairs of the Punjab came to be settled. *It was evident that he had no cause for gratitude or attachment to the Lahore Durbar*, by whose orders and intrigues his own family had been nearly exterminated, his possessions taken, and his sons slain. During the whole of the campaign he had purposely kept aloof; not a single hill soldier had fired a shot against us; so that the Government had every right to treat with him. *They had their own interests, also, to attend to, which required that the Sikh State should be weakened and that the hills should be separated from the plains.*

Were we to be deterred from doing what was right and what had been previously determined upon, because the Lahore Durbar, knowing he had not participated in their crime, chose to employ him for a particular object as being the man most acceptable to us? *Was he not the Minister, and were not four other* Commissioners associated with him for settling the terms of peace? After Mudki and Feroze Shah, the Rani had implored him to come to Lahore and bring his troops to her aid. He sent evasive answers. After the battle of Aliwal more pressing invitations were sent, as he alone, in their opinion, could settle affairs with the English, because he had not taken part against them. He came to Lahore protesting publicly in Durbar against all that had been done. *He accepted the responsibility of attempting a settlement, but required the Rani to sign a paper that she would accede to the terms which he and the other four Commissioners should agree upon.* He had been told by Major Lawrence on the 3rd February in a written document that he appreciated his wisdom in not having taken up arms against us and that his interests would be taken into consideration. The words of the Proclamation, dated 14th February, were these:

> "The extent of the territory which it may be advisable to take will be determined by the conduct of the Durbar and by consideration for the security of the British Frontier."

These words were meant to include any arrangements which would render the hills independent of the plain, which arrangement had been well considered before the battle of Sobraon. *It was always intended that Gulab Singh, whose troops had not* fired a shot, should have his case and position fully considered. *What act of treason, then, had he committed against the Lahore State? He had done good service to us, which we had recognised before he was a Sikh Commissioner.* After the war commenced, were we to abandon our policy and to treat the only man who had not lifted upon his arms against us with indifference because he came to Headquarters specially deputed

by the Lahore Durbar to confer with us as one who had not joined in their unprovoked invasion? *His forbearance was rewarded because his forbearance was in accordance with an intended policy, and because the charge of* treachery could not be substantiated."[1]

In the third letter addressed to Queen Victoria to clarify his position in the doubtful transaction in the eyes of his Sovereign, written from Lahore three weeks after the signing of the Treaty, Hardinge wrote that it appeared to him desirable "to weaken the Sikh State which has proved itself too strong" by making arrangement by which "Cashmere may be added to the possession of Gulab Singh and declaring the Rajput Hill States with Cashmere, independent of the Sikhs of the plain". It is thus clear that while in one letter the main excuse advanced is the emptiness of the Sikh treasury and the consequent necessity of selling these territories to Gulab Singh in order to recover war indemnity, in the other one the justification advanced is to reward Gulab Singh for his treachery.

....BUT THE TRUTH REMAINS

It is pertinent to point out that what Lord Hardinge chose not to write to his superiors in England, was that Gulab Singh owed his rise and fortune to the Sikh Durbar which he joined as a servant at a salary of rupees 90 per month and while in its service, had, in a short span of 38 years enriched himself so much as to have been able to offer ten million rupees. The Governor-General also did not tell them or telling so did not help that only recently had his estate been restored by the Durbar on his undertaking to pay a sum of rupees 68 lacs out of which he had paid rupees twenty-seven lacs only.[2] What legal, moral or political right he then had to get confirmed even in these possessions? Why was not he required to make the balance of rupees forty-one lacs available to his Sovereign for payment as war indemnity, thus sparing the Sovereign of the loss of such a vast territory as was taken away in lieu of the amount, only to be sold to him?

According to Khushwant Singh, when Sikhs sent an army against Jammu, Gulab Singh agreed to pay rupees 35 lacs but paid rupees five lacs only. Then in Lahore he was fined rupees 68 lacs but he paid rupees 27 lacs only. It means that he was in any case liable to pay to the Sikh Court at least rupees 41 lacs. Considering the fact that rupees 41 lacs was in any case payable to the Court and a sum of rupees 15 lacs seized by the British from Ferozepore and claimed by Gulab Singh to have belonged to Suchet Singh—was also Sikh money, Gulab Singh thus paid only rupees 19 lacs for the purchase of Kashmir.

1 Panikkar, p. 100 to 103.
2 Khushwant Singh, p. 37.

A few years later, Sir Henry Montgomery Lawrence wanted to set up a "Hill Asylum" at Hanover, England, since known as the Lawrence Royal Military School. Gulab Singh promptly offered a donation of rupees one lac. Given below is the reply sent by Lawrence; the original draft lies in the India Office Library :

"My Friend,

I have received your friendly letter of the 6th January offering me a lakh of rupees for the Hill Asylum. I have its interests so much at heart and am so anxious to see it started at once that I regret to be obliged to delay for a day the acceptance of your liberal offer. We must however, my friend, look to appearances in these matters and as many important subjects such as the boundary, the maintenance of the chiefs and the settlement of Sheikh Imamoodeen's accounts, are still partly undecided, were I to accept your gift at present, *your motives in giving might be misconstrued and my conduct in taking be belied*; I therefore beg that you will withhold the money for six months; after which time if you offer, I shall have much pleasure in requesting Government to permit me to accept it and to enrol your Highness's name at the head of the benefactors of the Hill Asylum. I will also ask that this correspondence may be published in the newspapers."[1]

One may also ask: If Hazara was thrown away in 1846 on account of being "unproductive", how did it become productive only a year later when the same Governor-General, vide his proclamation No. 6 dated the 25th May 1847, accepted it back against Kheri and Manawar—actually much more productive and peaceful than Hazara?

The war, not being of their chosing, as it was thrust upon the Sikhs by Hardinge, the terms of the treaty of Lahore at once appear extremely harsh and unreasonable. In addition to putting an end to its independence, acceptance of Britain as its paramount authority and the stationing at Lahore of a Resident with a strong force, practically to rule and overrule the Durbar, the treaty also provided for perpetual transfer of the whole Doab area—a very huge territory by any standards; to have imposed a further punishment of rupees 1½ crore as war damages, looks, on the very face of it, malafide. That the Sikh treasury could not afford to pay more than rupees 50 lacs and the Governor-General acquired more territory as a substitute and sold the same to Gulab Singh, the Sikh negotiator, leaves no doubt that all this long and zigzag path was adopted to reward the Dogra

1 IOL Mss. Eur. D/646.

for his anti-Sikh role, not only in the conduct of war but also in agreeing to and accepting such humiliating, highly unjust and questionable terms.

Giving the background of the sale, the knowledgable J.D. Cunningham has said:

> " The Governor-General desired not only to chastise the Sikhs for their past aggressions, but to overawe them for the future, and he had thus chosen the Beas, as offering more commanding position with reference to Lahore than the old boundary of the Sutlej. With the same object in view, he had originally thought Raja Golab Singh might advantageously be made independent in the hills of Jummoo. Such a recognition by the British Government had, indeed, always been one of the wishes of that ambitious family; but it was not, perhaps, remembered that Golab Singh was still more desirous of becoming the acknowledged minister of the dependent Punjab; nor was it perhaps thought that the overtures of the Raja—after the battle of Aleewal had forboded the total rout of the Sikh army—were all made in the hope of assuring to himself a virtual viceroyalty over the whole dominion of Lahore. *Golab Singh had been appointed Vuzeer by the chiefs and people when danger pressed them and he had been formally treated with as Minister by the English when the Governor-General thought time was short, and his own resources distant*; but when Lal Singh saw that after four pitched battles the English viceroy was content or compelled to leave Lahore a dependent ally, he rejoiced that his undiminished influence with the mother of the Maharaja would soon enable him to supplant the obnoxious chief of Jummoo. *The case sycophant thus congratulated himself on the approaching success of all his treasons, which had simply for their object his own personal aggrandizement at the expense of Sikh independence. Golab Singh felt his inability to support himself without the countenance of the English; but they had offered no assurance of support as minister, and he suddenly perplexed the Governor-General by asking what he was to get for all he had done to bring about a speedy peace, and to render the army an easy prey.* It was remembered that at Kussoor he had said the way to carry on a war with the English was to leave the sturdy infantry entrenched and watched, and to sweep the open country with cavalry to the gates of Delhi; and while negotiations were still pending, and the season advancing, it was desired to conciliate one who might render himself to the Sikh forces, and by opening his treasures and arsenals to a warlike population.
>
> The low state of the Lahore treasury, and the anxiety of Lal Singh to get a dreaded rival out of the way, enabled the Governor-General

to appease Golab Singh in a manner sufficiently agreeable to the Raja himself, and which still further reduced the importance of the successor of Runjeet Singh. *The Raja of Jummoo did not care to be simply the master of his native mountains; but as two thirds of the pecuniary indemnity required from Lahore could not be made good, territory was taken instead of money, and Cashmere and the hill states from the Beas to the Indus were cut off from the Punjab proper, and transferred to Golab Singh as a separate sovereign for a million of pounds sterling. The arrangement was a dexterous one, if reference be only had to the policy of reducing the power of Sikhs; but the transaction scarcely seems worthy of the British name and greatness, and the objections become stronger when it is considered that Golab Singh had agreed to pay sixty-eight lacs of rupees* (68,000,00) *as a fine to his paramount, before the war broke out, and that the custom of the East as well as of the West requires the feudatory to aid his lord in foreign war and domestic strife. Golab Singh ought thus to have paid the deficient million of money as a Lahore subject, instead of being put in possession of Lahore provinces as an independent prince.* The succession of the Raja was displeasing to the Sikhs generally, and his separation was less in accordance with his own aspirations than the ministry of Runjeet Singh's empire; but *his rise to sovereign power excited nevertheless the ambitions of others, and Tej Singh, who knew his own wealth, and was fully persuaded of the potency of gold, offered twenty-five lacs of rupees for a princely crown and another dismembered province. He was chided for his presumptuous misinterpretation of English principles of action; the arrangement with Golab Singh was the only one of the kind which took place*, and the new ally was formally invested with the title of Maharaja at Amritsar on the 16th March, 1846. But a portion of the territory at first proposed to be made over to him was recovered by his masters, the payments required from him were reduced by a fourth, and they were rendered still more easy of liquidation by considering him to be the heir to the money which his brother Soochet Singh had buried in Ferozepur......"

"This had been the aim of the family for many years or at least, from the time that Dhian Singh exerted himself to remove Colonel Wade, in the hope that a British representative might be appointed who would be well disposed towards himself which he thought Colonel Wade was not. Mr. Clerk was aware of both schemes of the Lahore Minister, although the greater prominence was naturally given to the project of rendering of Jummoo chiefs independent, owing to the aversion with which they were regarded after Nao Nihal Singh's death.

Had the English said that they desired to see Golab Singh remain

minister, and had they been careless whether Lal Singh lived or was put to death, it is highly probable that a fair and vigorous government would have been formed, and also that the occupations of Lahore, and perhaps the second treaty of 1846, need never have taken place.

Compare the Governor-General's letter to the Secret Committee, of the 3rd and 19th February, 1846. *In both of these despatches Lord Hardinge indicates that he intended to do something for Golab Singh, but he does not state that he designed to make him independent of Lahore, nor does he say that he told the Sikh chiefs the arrangements then afoot might include the separation of Jummoo;* and the truth would seem to be, that in the first joy of success the scheme of conciliating the powerful Raja remained in a manner forgotten."[1]

In a famous Kashmiri proverb, a man beseeches God to save him from the very person whom he brought up to manhood:

ہوسوئی روچھم - تس نشہ رچھتم خدایو

One might also ask: After all, what was the logic in providing in the treaty that a particular territory (Doab) was ceded as a simple cession and another territory in lieu of rupees one crore? Why not simply provide for a cash indemnity of rupees fifty lacs which was actually paid and direct annexation of all the territories in question? When it was known that not more than rupees fifty lacs was available as cash indemnity, why to provide in the treaty for a farcical and admittedly unrealisable amount of rupees 1½ crore? The conclusion that these unusual facts betray the working of guilty minds, is irresistible. The image that emerges thus of the great Queen Victoria's representative, is one of strong suspicion of personal involvement.

Commenting on the sale of Kashmir, Pandit Prem Nath Bazaz, has said :

"While making this transfer the British authorities in India did not so much as ascertain the views of the people of Kashmir on the subject. They did not consult even one of their leaders. It was altogether a sordid, shameful affair devoid of all sense of fairness, justice and equity. Two million of people in the valley and Gilgit were sold like sheep and cattle to an alien adventurer and the whole transaction was made behind their back. The treaty consisting of ten articles makes no mention whatsoever of the rights, interests or the future of the people".[2]

1 Cunningham : History of the Sikhs, p. 321 to 324.
2 Struggle for Freedom in Kashmir, p. 183.

According to the author of Letters from India and Kashmir:

"Kashmir was sold by the British Government for £7,50,000 but with this condition, that he should acknowledge our supremacy, and *in token thereof present annually twelve goats of approved breed and three pairs of Cashmere shawls at which rate we have received to date two hundred and eighty-eight goats, and six dozen shawls* ; one of those political mistakes that we make in a hurry to appease the demons of economy or of Exter Hall, and repent at our leisure ; or regret the fatality of the national tradition that we throw away by diplomacy what we win by the sword. *As Cashmere contained six hundred thousand inhabitants, they were estimated at twenty-five shillings a head, the most extensive transaction in the slave trade of modern times*"[1]

Another aspect of the sale and a very important one indeed, has been commented upon by Mrs. J.C. Murray Aynsley, which is as follows :

"....Such is the lamentable result of our having handed over this splendid and fertile country to the tender mercies of a Hindu bigot, with officials of the same faith as himself, the inhabitants of the country being Mohammadan. History shows us, in the case of our own Queen Mary, and also in that of Philip of Spain with regard to the Netherlands, that no rule is so cruel as that of a bigot over people of a faith differing from his own."[2]

"The chief motive of the Government was to show their displeasure to the Sikhs and they can never have realised what they were doing."[3]

W. Wakefield (not the Kashmir Minister) says:

"The huckstering spirit that so *often prevails our national policy and which caused the great Napoleon to apply to us the term of a nation of shopkeepers, was dominant in this case;* for relinquishing all the advantages that accrued to us from its possession, the supreme Government sold this fair province to Rajah Gulab Singh for a paltry and insignificant sum of seventy five lacs of rupees, £7,50,000 in our money."[4]

Lt. Colonel Torrens has said :

"Poor Kashmir! when, after so many vicissitudes of slavery to a foreign yoke, the hand of a powerful, just and merciful Government acquired the territory by force of arms in fair fight, and it seemed

1 Letters from India and Kashmir, p. 163.
2 Murray Ansley, p. 202.
3 Hon. Mrs. Bruce, p. 292.
4 The Happy Vale, p. 86.

that at last its condition was about to be ameliorated, its old ill-luck stuck by it still! *That hand had an itching palm, and they were again sold into the hands of the Philistines.* The last state of that country was worse than the first, for Gulab Singh went far beyond his predecessors in the gentle acts of undue taxation and extortion. *They had taxed heavily, it is true, but he sucked the very life-blood of the people; they had laid violent hands on a large proportion of the fruits of the earth, the profits of the loom, and the work of men's hands but he skinned the very flints to fill his coffers.*

No Englishman can leave Kashmir without a sigh of regret that a province so full of promise should ever have been allowed to slip through our fingers. It would now have owned us as its rulers for near upon twenty years, and we should have benefited by the acquisition as much as, I hope, the people would have been bettered by our rule."[1]

In an immortal verse on the eve of the inauguration of the League of Nations, Sir Mohammad Iqbal addressed the League as follows :

"O breeze! if thou dost pass
By Geneva sometime,
To the League of Nations take
This sad and gloomy ryme,
Each hill, each garden, field,
Each farmer too they sold,
A nation for a price
That makes my blood ice-cold."[2]

In May, 1847, Hazara and Kahuta in Rawalpindi district, which was also included in the sale-deed, were exchanged with the British against Kheri in Mirpur tehsil and Manawar which comprised, apart from Nowshera, a large portion of the existing Mirpur district. Previously these areas had, in the demarcation proceedings carried out by Major James Abbot, been included in the Punjab. According to Hashmatullah, Gulab Singh was keen to get rid of Hazara because of its warlike inhabitants. He testifies to serious disorder having broken out as a popular resentment against the sale. It was after Hari Chand and Jawala Sahai failed to restore complete order and foresaw continuous friction that the latter advised Gulab Singh to exchange it with Manawar and Kheri.[3]

1 Torrens, p. 300
2 Javed Nama : Translated by Sheikh Mahmood Ahmed, p. 151.
3 Hashmatullah, p. 8.

According to Hashmatullah, in recognition of his services as broker, Diwan Jawala Sahai received, in addition to an annual jagir of rupees ten thousand, rupees four per each thousand rupees of State revenue in prepetuity.

Rajas Jawahir Singh and Moti Singh, the two surviving sons of Raja Dhian Singh, who were in possession of Poonch, filed a petition before Sir Frederick Currie, the English Resident at Lahore claiming at least a part of the State and a division of the wealth belonging to their father and uncle. Their case was that the State had been purchased with the money of their father and uncle and that the family owed its rise to their father. The Resident dismissed their main claim on the ground that the British Government had no jurisdiction to adjudicate upon events that took place before the signing of the Treaty of Amritsar. They were, however, confirmed as Rajas in their own right but subject to the over-all jurisdiction of the Kashmir Durbar.

GULAB PAYS AFTER RECOVERY

The sum of rupees 50 lacs was to be paid on the ratification of the treaty and the remaining 25 lacs by 1st October, 1846. Actually what happened was that sometime *after the signing of the treaty* at Amritsar, Gulab Singh came forward with the claim that a sum of rupees 15 lacs which the British Government had recovered *before the treaty from* Ferozepur, belonged to his brother Suchet Singh and should be adjusted against his payment. The Governor General, Lord Hardinge not only accepted, *subsequent to the Treaty of Amritsar*, the claim, it seems, without any satisfactory enquiry that it really belonged to Suchet Singh but also the further claim that it should be adjusted against the amount of rupees 75 lacs recoverable from him. Suchet Singh had several wives and even if he had no legitimate son or daughter, assuming that it was his money, it is really strange that his widows and nephews should have been so arbitrarily and thoughtlessly deprived of their rights to it. It is also indefensible that the Lahore Durbar whose subject he was and from within whose jurisdiction the amount was seized, was totally ignored. Again, Suchet Singh was killed more than two years before the first Sikh war, so the ownership of the amount in question must have been already known at the time of the signing of the Amritsar Treaty. If it really belonged to Suchet Singh and if Gulab Singh was really entitled to it and further, if Lord Hardinge's conduct was really above board, how is it that the matter was hushed up at the time the treaty was signed and it was only afterwards that Gulab Singh's right to it surfaced up and was readily acknowledged?

Be that as it may, it is practically unknown that the terms of the treaty were not adhered to in so far as the period fixed for the payment of the stipulated amount is concerned. The first instalment of rupees fifty lacs was to be paid on the ratification of the treaty. The Governor General personally invested Gulab Singh with the investiture of "His Highness the Maharaja of Jammu and Kashmir" on 16th March 1846 at Amritsar soon after the signing of the treaty. The first instalment of rupees fifty lacs, fell due on 30th March, 1846, and the remainder rupees twenty-five lacs was to be paid before 1st October 1846 but what actually happened is *that the stipulated amount was paid in at least* 42 *instalments* ! The balance due on 22nd August, 1848—-more than two years after the sale, was rupees seven lacs, forty-seven thousand, eight hundred and thirteen, annas four and pies seven. On 9th January 1849 it still stood at rupees one lac ninety-eight thousands and seventy-six, annas nine and pies eleven. From 9th February 1848 to 23rd August 1849, was paid a sum of rupees four lacs, forty-nine thousand three hundred one, annas twelve and pies six only. On 12th May, 1849 Sir John Lawrence, demanded immediate payment of the balance. These reminders and demands had become an almost routine feature ever since the signing of the treaty. There are at least five instalments of rupees ten thousand each.

The last instalment was paid on 14th March 1850, exactly four years after the signing of the infamous treaty and amounted to rupees one thousand three hundred, thirty-seven, annas fifteen and pies six only. Among the amounts adjusted against the outstanding price, was a sum of rupees twenty-one thousand and seventeen, paisa twelve and pies five, the price of timber supplied by the Maharaja for the construction of a cantonment at Wazirabad and a sum of rupees eighteen hundred paid to a certain Jugal Kishore, news-writer, for the supply of 28 handkerchiefs. Gulab Singh had posted at the court of the British Resident at Lahore a representative, Qazi Mohkum Din who appears to have enjoyed complete confidence of his employer. Almost the entire correspondence on the subject between them passed through him. Suchet's treasure at Ferozepur included Sicca *Company rupees* numbering sixty thousand two hundred thirty-five, weighing sixty-four thousand four hundred forty-four tolas and valued at eleven lacs fifty-five thousand, nine hundred seventy-nine ordinary rupees. It was counted in the presence of Sheikh Saudagar, a Mautabar of Suchet Singh. On 9th April, 1846 Lawrence protested in writing against delay in payment of the first instalment, stating that the British Government was in need of it. The first instalment of rupees twenty-one lacs was sent from Jammu to Jullundhur on 18th April 1846 under a military guard consisting of a platoon with 2 guns and commanded by Bije Singh Kamidan. It was loaded

on 45 carts, 20 camel, six box-carrying coolies and forty Kahars. Five extra carts were also attached; yet, counted at the receiving end, it fell short by rupees nine thousand, one hundred and twenty-eight! The explanation furnished for the short fall was that the sacks were old and that part of the journey had been performed by night. A perusal of the details shows that all types of currency was used in payment including the Muhammad Shahi (Mughal) ashrafis as well as coins from Oudh.[1]

Sikhs used to farm out Kashmir valley, for rupees sixty-eight lacs a year; that makes an income of rupees two crore seventy-two lacs in four years from the Vale alone. It is acknowledged that while the Sikhs had taxed heavily, Gulab Singh sucked the very life-blood out of them. Imagine what it must have then meant in terms of money? By the time the sale-price had been fully paid, the vendee may have already realised crores of rupees and thus on 14th March 1850 when he paid the final instalment, he must have had the satisfaction of having already made tons of money from the slave-deal.

SHEIKH IMAM-UD-DIN'S CHOICE

After purchasing the territory, Gulab Singh was naturally anxious to acquire its possession. A person whom intrigue and money had brought so much success and helped to overcome seemingly hopeless situations, can be safely presumed to have instinctively resorted to their employment in winning over the reigning Sikh Governor Sheikh Imam-ud-Din in order to pave way for a quiet take-over. In an article in the Calcutta Review of July 1847, a contemporary, who was well-acquainted with the Sheikh, has said of him:

> "The Sheikh is perhaps the best mannered and the best dressed man in the Punjab. He is rather under, than above, the middle height, but his figure is exquisite and is usually set of with the most unrivalled fit which the unrivalled tailors of Kashmir will achieve for the Governor of the province. His smile and bow are those of a perfect courtier whose taste is too good to be obsequious, his great natural intelligence and unusually good education have endowed him with considerable conversational powers."[2]

> "....and his Persian idiom would do no dishonour to a native of Shiraz. Beneath this smooth surface of accomplishment and courtesy, lies an ill-assorted and incongruous disposition: ambition, pride, effeminacy, voluptuousness and timidity."[3]

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1 Tarikh Aaina Dikhati hai.
2 Panikkar, p. 117.
3 Sethi, p. 3.

The local Muslims were strongly opposed to the substitution of the Sikhs by the Dogras because having, for the first time, tasted political humiliation, religious persecution and economic strangulation at the hands of Sikhs—a non-Muslim community, they had no reason to hope for any better under the Dogras; they must have already been posted with detailed facts of the barbarities inflicted by Gulab Singh in Poonch and Kishtwar; they must have also learnt of the yet unheard of methods of torture and fleecing resorted to by Zorawar Singh in Kishtwar as well as in the northern regions; they had also already witnessed the total ascendency to power of Kashmiri Pandits and their own abrupt elimination from a position of trust, confidence and power during the Sikh regime; they had also, by that time, known the distressing fate of Muslims already living in the territories of Jammu which Gulab Singh had ruled since 1822 and had, therefore, every reason to join hands with the Khalsa army in Srinagar to resist the imposition of the Dogras.

The sale had been strongly condemned by the Anglo-Indian press as having created "the anamoly of a Hindu ruling a Muslim race", "as an inequitous arrangement" and as the handing over "of the hapless Kashmiris like so many logs of wood".[1] These papers now opposed an invasion of Kashmir and pointed out that apart from the people inhabiting the Vale, the Hill Rajas were united in their opposition and that bloodshed for such an end, ought to be avoided. There must have been no dearth of right-thinking Englishmen and women in India who did not approve of the sale and did not like their country to stand condemned in history as a slave-trade dealer and that too on such a mass scale. Lawrence seems to have been the most enthusiastic supporter of a British-led invasion and dismissing the apprehensions and opposition of the Anglo-Indian press, wrote to the Governor-General :

> "Every family (Hill Rajas of Muzaffarabad) is divided in itself and there is scarcely one of which one or more individuals are not with the Maharaja".[2]

A number of Kashmiris were familiar with individual Englishmen who came as tourists. They found them manly, humane and sympathetic to their desire for deliverance from the Sikhs. It came to them as a rude shock that of all people, it should have been the English to sell them into slavery. They thought there was something wrong somewhere. They could not believe that the Sahib-log could be so reckless, so senseless and so careless as to sell away—leave its people in whom they

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1 Maud Diver: Honoria Lawrence, p. 305.
2 PGR Register 174-B, p. 112.

were not interested, the paradise on Earth. Even Lawrence, the architect of British policy in the Punjab wrote of the Vale :

> "A Heavenly place. Such views of hills and lake, river or forest, as paradise alone could compete with."[1]

That it was a deliberate act makes the sale all the more lamentable. Lawrence seems to have been conscious of what a grievous wound was inflicted on an innocent people. Years after his death in Lucknow in 1857, the biographer of his wife Honoria Lawrence who had the facility of access to all his papers, wrote:

> "But ultimate success (in Punjab) covers a multitude of sins."[2]

It was, therefore, quite natural for Kashmiris to look towards Lord Hardinge for a re-appraisal of what he did, it seemed at the moment, in a hurry or under the unguarded flush of victory. Consequently three petitions were addressed to the Governor-General against the sale, one by Hill-chiefs who expressed "their great sorrow" at Kashmir being given to the Maharaja and stating that "they found no other remedy besides fighting against him". In another petition, the Chaudhries, Pandits, Manufacturers and local inhabitants told him that the "English by giving Kashmir to Gulab Singh are oppressing us......but if it be that we are to have him, we shall all run away, both small and great."[3]

Though a son of Sheikh Ghulam Mohi-ud-Din, his immediate predecessor, a protege of the Dogras, Imam-ud-Din had no personal obligation to them because he was a nominee of Lal Singh, Prime Minister of the Sikh Kingdom. Gulab Singh offered in writing to maintain him in his post on a salary of rupees one lac per annum and requested him "to protect and manage the country".[4] It appears that Imam-ud-Din had the following three alternatives:

1. Accept Gulab Singh's offer to continue in his post on a salary of rupees one lac per annum;

2. Oppose its transfer to Gulab Singh which Raja Lal Singh had told him would be treated as a receipt in full for his Kashmir accounts; or

3. Try to buy over the British and become an independent ruler of the Valley.

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1 Maud Diver in Honoria Lawrence, p. 391.
2 *Ibid.*, p. 306.
3 The Building of J&K State, p. 41.
4 PGR Register 174-B, p. 127.

From the events as they unfolded, no room is left for doubt that Imam-ud-Din was essentially a selfish man who determined his course, throughout the stormy period, in accordance with the dictates of his personal expediencies. He had amassed considerable wealth and on account of the state of uncertainty prevailing at Lahore, withheld if not the whole, at least the major part of its revenue. His first and foremost anxiety, therefore, seems to have been somehow to escape a settlement of accounts. His next anxiety seems to have been to protect his own wealth which he had to carry with him while returning to Lahore. It seems he did not trust Gulab Singh's word and obviously no one with a grain of sense would have acted otherwise because it was clearly apparent that being out of possession, it suited him to humour and temporarily appease Imam-ud-Din, the top man on the spot, as the easiest way of securing possession because after filling the Hariparbat fort with his men and taking over control of the Valley, nothing prevented him from throwing out the Sheikh. A man, with whom intrigue, deceit and murder was a way of life and who was capable, even in the midst of the 19th century, to skin alive fallen foes and place them in cages on roads frequented by travellers to remind them how cruel he could be, could not be trusted by Imam-ud-Din even in his own interests.

It is quite possible that he may have tried to strike a bargain with the British for the acquisition of Kashmir valley in consideration of some amount. Lahore Akhbar reported at the time that he had offered to purchase it for a sum of rupees thirty-five lacs.[1] It is likely that Lord Hardinge was approached either through his son George or the British officers deputed to Srinagar and that may also explain as being one of the reasons for Gulab Singh's slow movement as he might have taken counter measures to prevent such an understanding. George Hardinge was in Srinagar by the middle of June. Immediately afterwards arrived Broome and his three colleagues. It was, as will be noticed, in the second half of September—after more than three months, that active steps for the eviction of Sheikh Imam-ud-Din and disruption of the elements that had joined hands in Srinagar to resist the passage of the territory into Dogra hands, were taken in hand not only by the British but also by Gulab Singh. What was happening behind the scene during these 100 days is not and may never be known but it is difficult to accept the position, knowing as we do both the British as well as Gulab Singh, that they were, for no reasons, silent, passive, and inactive. Having failed to secure the sale of the territory, Imam-ud-Din appears to have fallen in line with the directions from Lahore that he should

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1 The Building of J&K State, p. 45.

not make over possession to Gulab Singh and that in lieu thereof, his liabilities to the Durbar would be liquidated.

HARDINGE'S SUSPICIOUS CONDUCT

A very important fact that may be taken notice of here is Maharaja Gulab Singh's claim that the Sheikh had sent presents to Lord Hardinge, the Governor General.[1] It raises an important question: Did the Governor-General really accept presents? Gulab Singh had already met him several times. It was the same Governor General who had sold away a people into his slavery and invested him with the title of "His Highness the Maharaja of Jammu and Kashmir".

It is interesting to point out that he had begun describing Lord Hardinge as a friend only six months after the signing of the Amritsar treaty on which occasion he stood up and with folded hands, in the open durbar, told him that he was indeed his "Zur-khareed Ghulam". It is also pertinent to point out that in the year 1846, it was extra-ordinary for the ruler of a princely State to refer to the G.G. as a friend. As his career shows, Gulab was a confirmed believer in the saying that money makes the mare go and that almost anyone anywhere could be won over. Did he, therefore, speak from personal experience that the Governor-General accepted presents and was thus open to influence through such means?

Having failed to win over the Governor, Gulab Singh despatched a strong force under the joint command of Wazirs Lakhpat and Ratnu to take possession of the Valley by force. When they reached the outskirts of Srinagar and demanded possession, Sheikh Imam-ud-Din expressed his inability to comply with the demand in the absence of official information from the Sikh Durbar. Meanwhile a large number of local Muslims had joined hands with the troops under the command of Mirza Faqirullah, son of Mirza Rahimullah of Rajouri, a Sikh Vassal stationed at Srinagar. Mirza Faqirullah did his best to get the Governor's permission for an immediate attack on the invaders but the same was refused. Wazir Lakhpat arrived on or about the 14th of June, 1846. His entry into the city was neither opposed nor denied; his force was allowed to camp in the extensive grounds at Maisuma, now a densely-inhabited locality.

It is difficult to surmise whether it was by deliberate design or a mere coincidence that by about the same time arrived in Srinagar a very

1 The Building of J&K State, p. 45.

important guest in the person of Charles Hardinge, the son and Private Secretary of the Governor-General. Did he come innocently just for a sight-seeing visit or was he sent by his father to ask Imam-ud-Din to hand over possession to Gulab Singh? He was no ordinary Englishman. It is rather difficult to assume that the son of Her Britannic Majesty's chief representative in the vast sub-continent of India and a member of the protocol-conscious English race, would have, just by coincidence, chosen this wrong moment for a sight-seeing visit. They say there is a method even in madness. There is evidence that the Governor-General had acted with surprising haste on the communication of Gulab Singh demanding to be put into possession. Soon after the arrival of Charles Hardinge, Sheikh Imam-ud-Din not only vacated the Hariparbat fort, but also made over to Lakhpat all the ordnances and stores kept therein. *There is evidence that this transfer had taken place on the intervention of Charles Hardinge.*[1]

An amount of over fifteen lacs remained unpaid even at the time of his retirement from India in January 1848. Neither was Gulab Singh short of money nor did the otherwise strong-minded Governor-General initiate any serious process, to say the least of having taken any punitive measure, to enforce the payment.

That a son of the Governor-General who was not in any way concerned with the matter, should have interested himself on the side of Gulab Singh and secured the transfer of the only important fort in the Valley to his men, when considered together with the facts that have already emerged, does not bring forth a happy image of the Governor-General. Was Charles sent to enter into pretentious negotiations with Imam-ud-Din on the latter's offer to substitute Gulab Singh as purchaser in so far as the Valley was concerned, to alarm Gulab Singh and thereby compel him to fulfil a secretly-entered bargain? Afterall, there are instances from the British Indian history when his more illustrious predecessors, Clive and Warren Hastings, who returned to their country loaded with riches of doubtful origin, were condemned by their own country-men as "nabobs" and brought to trial. It is noteworthy that Charles, who was accompanied by other English officers, first went to Jammu to meet with Gulab Singh. Nicholson, as Master of ceremonies, insisted that on their first meeting, they should take off their shoes before being ushered into the presence of the Maharaja but :

> "We unanimously agreed that we would not make fools of ourselves, merely to please a man who owed everything to the British."[2]

1 The Building of J&K State, p. 47.
2 Charles Hardinge, p. 138.

Hardinge left India in January, 1848. He seems to have been seized by his conscience for the grievous wrong he had done to the people of Kashmir by selling them over to a person universally condemned as a tyrant. This is apparent from the following unpublished letter which he wrote to Gulab Singh on the eve of his departure:

"From the Governor General[1]

To

Maharajah Golab Singh :

AC.

Dated 7th January, 1848.

My friend,

I am about to take my departure for Europe *and I am anxious before I leave India* to address your Highness with the freedom and sincerity of a friend anxious for your welfare, and, above all other considerations, for the happiness of the people committed to your charge by me when I signed the Treaty of March, 1846.

Your Highness is aware of the principle by which the British Government is guided in its Treaties with Eastern Princes where cessions of territory are involved—that whilst it will scrupulously fulfil all its obligations for the protection of its ally, it never can consent to incur the reproach of becoming indirectly the instrument of the oppression of the people committed to the Prince's charge.

If aversion of the people to a Prince's rule should by his injustice become so universal as to cause the people to seek his downfall, the British Government are bound by no obligation to force the people to submit to a Ruler who has deprived himself of their allegiance by his misconduct.

Again, if the British Government by its treaties with neighbouring Princes and the proximity of its own forces on the Frontier, can so far protect the Prince as to enable him the more securely to apply all his forces to the oppression of his subjects, such a state of things would be still more repugnant to the feelings of the British Government because it would indirectly prevent the people from rising and redressing their own wrongs.

In no case therefore will the British Government be the blind instrument of a Ruler's injustice towards his people, and if inspite of friendly

1. P G R, Lahore.

warnings, the evil of which the British Government may have just cause to complain is not corrected, a system of direct interference must be resorted to which, as your Highness must be aware, would lower the dignity and curtail the independence of the ruler.

Your Highness must be well convinced that I have never been actuated by any such desire—on the contrary, it has been my inclination as evinced by my acts and those of the Resident, Colonel Lawrence, to give your Kingship every possible support. This desire must however be regulated by the duty of the British Government towards your Highness' subjects, and the Government cannot submit to the stigma of tolerating oppression. *Let my friendly advice to your Highness make a salutary impression.* Avoid the interference of the British Government by a ready compliance with its just demands in which the Governor General can have no other interest than to secure the well-being of your Highness' subjects, and to witness the success of your rule over a happy people.

This is the parting advice of your Highness' well-wisher and friend.

(True translation)

Sd/-

Secretary to the Government of India."

DOGRAS DEFEATED IN SRINAGAR

As a result of the unabated pressure mounted by the British and supported by assurances he was asking for and his own complimentary needs to oblige them, Imam-ud-Din decided, in the third week of August, to leave for Lahore after handing over possession to the Agents of Gulab Singh. When it became known, the local Muslims as well as the Hill Chiefs descended upon him with reproaches for his cowardice. His wife, Wakeelan, the widow of Rehmatullah, who was "proud of her kin and blood" and who commanded considerable influence over him, appears to have been staunchly opposed to such a passive course by her husband. Lt. Edwardes has said of her:

"..She is related to the Khakha-Bamba Chiefs; is said to be an intriguing and head-strong woman, full of schemes for Muhammadan Ascendency—one of those mischievous characters so common in the East, a Harem politician. This woman has gained an easy influence over Sheikh Imam-ud-Din and on a late occasion when wishing to goad him to hostilities, placed sentries over her apartments with

orders not to let him pass. "He is NOT a MAN", she said, "What can he want with a wife. *After the fight*, let him come, if he chooses."[1]

But he proceeded with his plans to evacuate and pitched his tents at Rambagh to ensure that all his wealth was on the move as well as adequately protected on the march.

However, on the approaching night, Wazir Ratnu's men fired a carbine and some muskets on his guards, resulting in the death of a Rohilla and injuries to several others. The mutual hatred of the opposing forces had been building up since the middle of June and confidence of each to over-power the other, had by now surfaced into a strong feeling. Both were now impatient for a bloody battle to determine, as they thought, the fate and future of the beautiful Vale.

In such circumstances, the provocation was enough to bring the two sides to blows; the mutual firing under the cover of darkness continued for hours. Next morning, a pitched battle was fought in Maisuma between the Dogras led by Hukam Chand and the local forces led by Mirza Faqirullah who has been described as "fire-brand of the rebellion" and this "lord and leader of the insurgents".[2] The Dogras were routed. The force under the command of Wazir Ratnu was attacked by another detachment commanded by Risaldar Jan Mohammad. Lakhpat was killed and the remnant of his five thousand men fled to the top of Takht-e-Sulaiman. Wazir Ratnu himself fled to the Hariparbat fort. Faqirullah led a force to Takht-e-Sulaiman in pursuit of the Dogras who, instead of giving a battle, sued for peace and surrendered.[3] Wazir Ratnu was besieged in the fort for 40 days,[4] by which time Imam-ud-Din had finally decided to quit the Valley after having gained his objectives. The defence in various sectors was led by Faqirullah, Dutto Mal, Sujan Singh, Col. Basant Singh, Samad Khan, Mirza Murtaza and Sultan Moizz-ud-Din Khan. Fateh Singh and Gulzari were placed in Hindu localities to ensure that they came to no harm, as also to keep an eye over their movements as it was no secret that they were largely in favour of Gulab Singh. Gulab Singh wrote to Lawrence after the defeat of his forces in Srinagar:

> "I trust in the British Government and hope NOT to be deserted. Assist me quickly, otherwise the Sheikh will call on the Afghans and do foolish things.....I placed my trust on your orders and in consequence, a heavy wound has fallen on my army. Postscript: If not

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1 PGR Press list, Serial No. 1133, from Ed. to Lawrence dated 4th October, 1846.
2 The Building of J&K State, p.68.
3 Hashmatullah, p. 62.
4 Sohan Lal, p. 194.

improper, I hope you will tell the Seikhs to join me. I will not fail to foster them."[1]

A force of 900 men under Saifullah was despatched to Rajouri which showed that the joint Sikh-Muslim forces at the disposal of Sheikh Imam-ud-Din were confident of their strength and security. Letters were sent to Hill-chiefs to be ready for a war of resistance. They also started fortifications. The whole Valley was humming with activity with the winds of hope and despair blowing simultaneously. The chief rebels were, Raja Sher Ahmed of Karnah, Raja Atta Mohammad of Dopatta, Raja Muzaffar Khan of Uri and Raja Myup Khan of Muzaffarabad. At this stage, some short-sighted people started cow-slaughter which was resented by the Sikh elements and exploited by their common enemies. One wonders why better sense didn't prevail because cow-slaughter is merely permissive but not compulsory. Perhaps there could not be a less inopportune moment for vindication of the right than the one chosen when Muslims and Sikhs were fighting shoulder to shoulder against Dogra ascendency to supreme power.

Gulab Singh wrote to Lawrence:

"Owing to differences on religious questions, probably cow-killing, the Sikhs in Cashmere are displeased with Sheikh Imam-ud-Din and are turning towards me. Their officers have even relieved Huree Purbhut with water, on hearing which the Sheikh has increased his precautions."[2]

The defeat of the Dogras in Srinagar, brought about a climate of universal opposition to the transfer of the territory to Gulab Singh. The people of Kohistan also rose in arms against him.[3] Roop Lal, the Governor of Jasrota, made over all the forts to the rebels and advised them not to deal with the agents of Gulab but seek justice from Henry Lawrence! He also handed over the stores, ammunition and camel swivels to the rebels. The troops sent to Jasrota, Ramnagar, Bhadarwah and Bhimber by Gulab Singh were defeated. There was greater turmoil in Bhimber and Hazara. Gulab Singh then personally led an expedition against Ramnagar and Jasrota. Stiff resistance was offered by the Phundanwallan tribe but the same was overcome. Wrote Gulab Singh:

"*Under the auspices of the British Government*, I attacked them and gained possession of the fort."[4]

1 PGR Register 176, p. 137-138.
2 PGR Register 176, p. 137-138.
3 &4 The Building of J&K State, p. 37, 40.

Rahimullah and Faiz Talab revolted in Rajouri and Poonch but were defeated. Gulab Singh suspected that they too had been instigated and encouraged by Raja Lal Singh. In Mirpur, Devan Sher Baz Khan raised the banner of revolt. Ten to twelve thousand Dogra troops were engaged in suppressing the resistance in Bhimber, Mirpur, Rajouri and Poonch. A number of villages were burnt down. Faiz Talab had to flee to the Punjab while others surrendered.[1] Faiz Talab and Rahimullah had earlier made an unsuccessful attempt on the life of Gulab Singh in 1845. Faiz Talab whose family had been imprisoned by Gulab Singh, was presented to Lawrence by Raja Lal Singh on 24th August 1845 and requested for their release. Gulab Singh appears to have been still negotiating with Imam-ud-Din as a short cut to success. One of the rebels, Atta Ullah told the British officers[2] Broome, Hay, Nicholson and Farquharson who had been sent to Srinagar that the people of Kashmir or the Hill-chiefs were supporting Imam-ud-Din not because they wanted to support him for his sake but out of their fear from and hatred against Gulab Singh and his likely fleecing them. At the same time, the Sikh officers and men posted at Srinagar also told them as well as Col. Attar Singh, a personal friend of Gulab Singh, who had been sent there by Lawrence at the express request of the former[3], that unless their large arrears in pay were paid or the British Government undertook to do so, they would not return to Lahore. When this information was conveyed to Lt. Edwardes who was working for the same objective at the other end, Jammu, he prevailed upon Gulab Singh to issue a proclamation, promising:

1. decrease in the revenue exactions by 1/5th, and
2. to pay the arrears of pay to Sikh soldiers serving with Imam-ud-Din if they returned to the British camp.

It is pertinent to point out that the proclamation was signed, in addition to Gulab Singh, by Lt. Edwardes, implying British responsibility that it will be carried out. This also shows that Gulab Singh's promises carried no credit in the eyes of the people.

THE BRITISH INTERVENTION

There is no doubt that Sheikh Imam-ud-Din had no stomach for a fight and was merely bidding for time and using Kashmiris as well as Sikhs to secure as favourable terms from the British as possible. The Governor-General had already deputed Lt. Herbert Edwardes, Assistant Political

1 *Ibid*, p. 41.
2 *Ibid*, p. 62.
3 PGR Letter No. 176 dated 10th September, 1846.

Agent, to remain with Gulab Singh "at the present juncture" and advise him, and also to keep the Governor-General informed.[1] In his letter of introduction, Lawrence told Gulab:

> "Listen to him as myself; he is wise in counsel and bold in action; you could not have a better adviser."[2]

Delighted, Edwardes wrote to a friend:

> "How you would laugh, a Lieutenent of Foot advising the King of the mountains! But such is India."[3]

A few days later, Lawrence again wrote to him:—

> "to bestir himself and quell the rebellion in Kashmir. The Maharaja should look upon the affair as his own and not as ours and should remember that the exertions of British Government will depend on the endeavours he may make himself."[4]

In his reply, Gulab Singh sought permission to enlist Sikh troops and hoped that he would not be deserted by the British.[5] Like all other English officers, Edwardes too was doing his best for Imam-ud-Din's peaceful vacation of Kashmir. It was in course of these efforts that he was told by Puran Chand, Sheikh Imam-ud-Din's Vakil posted at Lahore, that the Sheikh had been instigated by Raja Lal Singh not to hand over possession to Gulab Singh and that these letters were in possession of the Sheikh. This was a news for the Britishers. Gulab Singh had been already complaining that the Lahore Durbar and Imam-ud-Din were trying to raise the Hill people against him. He ordered Qazi Mohkam Din, one of his Agents at Lahore, to request Lawrence to order the Sikh Durbar to hand him over the forts at Ramnagar, Jasrota, etc. Wrote Gulab:

> "If these men at Lahore were to be sharply chastised and punished and more than that, orders given to them to go themselves and put the guards (his) into the strongholds and to bring back my receipt (of having received possession), it would be very well. Even Jalal Khan who was sent to me for the very purpose of putting in my guards, never arrived."[6]

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1 PGR Letter No. 181, dated 12th September, 1846 from Lawrence to Currie.
2 PGR Book 176-25, p. 42.
3 Maud Diver in Honoria Lawrence, p. 312.
4 PGR Serial No. 412, Book No. 176.
5 PGR Book No. 176-60, p. 137-38.
6 The Building of J&K State, p. 38.

It is true that Raja Lal Singh had sent several letters to Imam-ud-Din asking him to remain faithful to the Lahore Durbar and not to hand over possession of the territory to Gulab Singh. One of these letters, which was addressed to the officers and ranks of the Khalsa Army in Kashmir, under the official Seal of Maharaja Dalip Singh, is reproduced below:

"This order is now sent to you and after receiving it, you will remain with the Governor, Sheikh Imam-ud-Din Khan Bahadur, doing the work of the State; and whenever he returns to the presence, you shall be kept in the service as before. Have no fear, therefore, but remain with the person in question. This is an imperative order. Consider your welfare as my care. Dated 28-7-1846."[1]

The second letter addressed to Imam-ud-Din which also shows that the transfer had taken place against the clear wishes of the Lahore Durbar, stated:

"Doubtless you will have perused the contents of my former letter. My friend, *you are not ignorant of the ingratitude and want of faith which Raja Gulab Singh has exhibited towards the Lahore Sarkar. It is indeed sufficiently glaring.* I now write, therefore, to request you, my friend, that you will not set before your eyes the example of your late father's former relations with the aforesaid Raja *but consider both your duty and your interest to lie this way, and inflict such injury and chastisement upon the said Raja that he shall have reason to remember it.* It is to be hoped that if the Raja but takes one false step, he will never be able to re-establish himself again. For your security and confidence, my friend, I have sent you a separate written guarantee, that you may have no misgivings as to the consequences. Let me often hear of your welfare.

P.S. Tear off this letter when you have read it. Dated 26th July 1846."[2]

The third letter addressed to Imam-ud-Din which contains an undertaking to write off the amount due from him to the Durbar, stated:

"I hereby promise that if my friend Sheikh Imam-ud-Din Khan Bahadur with goodwill and fidelity *to his proper masters*, duly performs the task imposed upon him in a separate letter, *my whole interest shall be exerted to secure him from being called to account by the British Government.* Whatever allowance, either he or his jagirdari horsemen

1 Sethi, p. 31.
2 *Ibid.*, p. 32.

or the Sheikh, his late father, received from the Lahore Government, the same jagirs and something added to them, as a reward for service, shall be assigned to him in the Lahore territory. By the grace of God, I will not fail to fulfil this that I have written. Dated 25 July 1846."[1]

In August, Henry Lawrence got hold of two letters allegedly sent by Sayeds of Kaghan indicating that Imam-ud-Din was instigating a rebellion against Gulab Singh and that it was at his request that Hakim Rai had been sent to Lahore. These letters were eventually found to be untrue and may have been forged by Gulab Singh. Apart from the fact that it was a common practice those days, we have already seen in the case of Kishtwar that Gulab Singh was adept at its use.

All this must have naturally upset Gulab Singh. After weighing the situation as it obtained in the Valley, for he must have been kept duly informed by his agents and after having come to the conclusion that despite his wealth and resources, it was not easy to effect the conquest of Kashmir, he rushed to Lahore and demanded, as one baniya from another baniya, its possession, pleading, obligation under the treaty. Lawrence, his known friend, already installed as Resident was only too willing to help a traitor to the Sikh Court. Within an hour of the receipt of Gulab Singh's appeal for help, the Governor-General declared in writing that the transfer must be enforced and that:

> "the British Government would give every possible support to Maharaja Gulab Singh in compelling the servant of the Durbar, Sheikh Imam-ud-Din, to evacuate Kashmir, holding the Durbar responsible for the acts of their officers in his gross violation of the treaty."[2]

The execution of the plan was entrusted to Col. Lawrence, it seems, at his own request:

> "But in October down came Henry bringing his friend Hodson (who later in 1857 caught and killed Bahadur Shah Zafar's three sons and 'chivalrously' presented their severed heads to their old father: author) on special leave; grasped the whole situation in a flash and decided to lead the force himself. Then for the first time was seen, he wrote afterwards, the extraordinary spectacle of a few British officers leading (into Kashmir) a lately subdued mutinous (Sikh) army through as difficult a country as there is in the world."[3]

1 *Ibid.*, p. 33.
2 Maud Diver in Honoria Lawrence, p. 312.
3 PGR. Pl. V. IX Serial No. 217.

The machinery was immediately put into motion. The Lahore Durbar was ordered to put, at Gulab Singh's disposal, ½ to 2/3 of all its troops stationed between Ravi and Attock and to act *on his instructions.* The Durbar was also asked to make a proclamation in border areas warning that anyone taking up arms against Gulab Singh would get his property confiscated.[1] At the same time, Lawrence addressed a letter to the Sikh soldiers in Kashmir, urging them to support Gulab Singh and promising to spare their lives and pay their arrears of pay. The letter, dated 24th September 1846, stated:

> "It was the practice of the English to warn and to give opportunity of escape before they slay. I warn you that if on receipt of this order you separate from the Sheikh and return to the Punjab, your lives will be spared and your arrears will be paid."[2]

Thus, while pressure on Imam-ud-Din continued to mount and attempts were made to win over the Khalsa army at Srinagar so as to demoralise the allies and break up their unity, preparations were simultaneously afoot for a joint British-Khalsa-cum-Dogra invasion of Kashmir.

On 15th September, the Governor General ordered six regiments of native infantry, two regiments of regular cavalry and 12 field guns to be kept in readiness at Jullundhur. On 22nd September, the Commander-in-Chief, under orders from the Governor General, moved these troops to protect Gulab's rear.[3] The Durbar troops selected by Lawrence were:

1. Under General Sher Singh: His own Kohistani (Mountaineers), five thousand men with four guns.
2. Under General Doab Singh, two regiments.
3. Under General Kahan Singh, two regiments.
4. Under General Imam Singh, two regiments with two guns.

Ten other guns with necessary munitions were got ready at Lahore under the direction of Captain Brind. Several officers were despatched to collect supplies and carriages from Rawalpindi on the one end and Jhang on the other.

On 6th October, Her Majesty's 62nd Regiment, 3 regiments of native infantry, two regiments of cavalry and 12 guns marched from Ferozepur to Lahore and Her Majesty's 80th regiment, 3 regiments of native infantry and 12 guns marched to Sialkot. Lt. Lumsden was to join the Sikh troops,

1 *Ibid.*, Serial No. 193.
2 PGR Serial No. 439, Book 176.
3 PGR Book No. 74 dated 12th September, 1846 from Governor-General to Currie.

already on move, at Rajouri. On 11th October, Brigadier Wheeler and his forces were sent to Bhimber. General Littler was already on the left bank of Chenab. As muskets were deficient in the Dogra army, 2,000 were lent from the nearest magazine and as many as possible were provided by the Lahore Durbar. On his part, Maharaja Gulab Singh had 6,000 men and 15 to 20 guns at hand. Out of his 20,000 army, 4,000 was in Srinagar, 6,000 in Chhibal, Jasrota and Jammu and 7,000 in Hazara. 3,000 consisted of mess levies; 2,500 men were fugitives and 300 were gunners. It made a total of 22,800. Sher Singh and Hari Chand were to march with 14,000 men via Baramula while Gulab Singh and Teja Singh were to move via Rajouri.

Gulab Singh left Dyal Chand of Chinani with 2,000 men to guard the Banihal pass for the security of Kishtwar and personally proceeded to Reasi on way to Srinagar via Rajouri at the head of a four thousand regular force. Edwardes met him at Reasi and told him that "the delay in the acquisition of Kashmir was due to His Highness's apathy in not proceeding in person to take possession of *the rich country which had been conferred on him* but entrusting the work to his officers". He also told him that a show of force was necessary.[1] Edwardes again informed Lawrence, that:

> "the *Maharaja's troops ordinarily received no pay but only rations. Only on some special occasions, such as active service, are a few rupees grudgingly bestowed upon the soldiers and then it is called an advance*... Maharaja is now doing all that parwanas can do in collecting a force, but an inconceivable avarice blights every good measure he attempts, as is evident from the weapons with which he is arming the wretched peasants, he is taking from the plough."[2]

The Maharaja, according to Edwardes:

> "would be glad to dispense with British force altogether, *if he could*, and with elegant insincerity likens the rebellion in Kashmir to a fire, his own and the Khalsa forces to a stick, and the British army to hands of his friend, the Governor-General. 'In trying to put out the fire, he says, 'it is right that the wood should be entirely consumed before the tips of the fingers of the British Government are scorched."[3]

After stating that Imam-ud-Din had about 12,000 regulars and irregulars, 5,000 to 8,000 Khakha, Bamba men, 1,000 of Faqirullah, 30 guns ranging from 6 pounder downwards and 50 zumboorucks Broome states:

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1 PGR Book 184-179, p. 331.
2 PGR Book 184-179, p. 331, and PGR Book 184-179C Sr. No. 1127.
3 PGR Book 184-179A, p. 331A.

"the Sheikh could destroy the Wazir's (Ratnu) forces in a few hours and starve them in a few days.......Imam-ud-Din's army was superior to the Dogras in men, money and munitions.....The people of Kashmir were favourable to him and the western Rajas, Hazaras, Gakhars awaited the hour to join him and the only pass open in winter——Baramula——was commanded by his allies."

However, the Governor, never, really intended to fight and having perhaps failed to strike a bargain with the British, all that he now seemed to want, was:

(1) A guarantee of personal security and release of his family from internment at Jullundhur.

(2) An undertaking that he would not be required to submit accounts and that nothing will be demanded from him on this account.

(3) That his jagir (Jullundhur) will not be forfeited.

(4) That his property would be allowed a safe passage and will not be interfered with.

It is established from official record that the British officers at Srinagar had given him assurances of a safe passage and met all his demands, but he seems not to have trusted a verbal undertaking. When his agent Puran Chand informed Lt. Edwardes that he had been delaying the transfer of possession on account of written instructions from Raja Lal Singh, Edwardes, after consulting Lawrence, promised to meet, in full, the demands of the Sheikh, provided he delivered these letters and vacated the territory. Imam-ud-Din, however, appears to have insisted upon a written pledge. On 1st October, Puran Chand and Fateh Khan Tiwana reached Srinagar and delivered him a letter from Edwardes who was immediately informed that the Sheikh had made up his mind to obey the order, requiring him to leave Kashmir and that, therefore, he need not be too precipitate in his arrangements for an invasion.[1] The letter sent by Edwardes and dated 22nd September, stated:

"If within two days after the arrival of the Vakil Poorun Chand, Sirdar Futteh Khan Towanah and others, you proceed to join me at once and disperse those over whom you have any influence, your life shall be spared and orders be issued for the release of your family, who are now in confinement, on the day that you give yourself up."

1 PGR Book 176-69, p. 147—49.

Sheikh Imam-ud-Din sent a submissive reply to Edwardes and thanked him for his advice; it ended with the following Persian verse:[1]

سپردم بتو مایهٔ خویش را
تو دانی حساب کم و بیش را

He also wrote an apologetic letter to Gulab Singh. When Puran Chand met Imam-ud-Din on his earlier mission from Edwardes who had entered into negotiations with the Sheikh with the permission of his higher authorities,[2] Gulab Singh also sent, through him, a "Tusullenamah" to the Sheikh which was very vague and contained but one actual promise of "subsistance". It was considered insufficient by Puran Chand as also by Edwardes. Puran Chand was also accompanied in his first mission by Fateh Khan, Ratan Singh, Jai Singh and Sardar Gulab Singh. It was after the receipt of the second letter from Edwardes which apart from guaranteeing personal safety, also guaranteed the safety of all his properties and a promise that he will not be required to render any accounts at all provided he "abandons his desperate enterprise and delivers himself up to the British Political Agent", that he immediately raised the siege of Hariparbat, released the Dogra officers and men who had been earlier taken prisoners and sent his men around informing people to give up their resistance. Leaving behind 4,000 horse and foot-soldiers under Col. Wazir Singh to preserve law and order, he left on 23rd October 1846 along with 3,000 troops, mostly Sikhs and Rohillas. By previous arrangement, he met Lt. Edwardes at Behramgala on 31st October and on the next day was presented to Henry Lawrence at Thana; Imam-ud-Din placed his arms at his feet. Haughtily wrote Lawrence:

> "The Ameenul Momnen placed his weapons at my feet and was inclined to place his head there also."

Imam-ud-Din had at no stage assumed the title of Ameen-ul-Maumeneen as Lawrence seems to suggest. The title implies a declaration of independence and that too, exclusively with Muslim support. Actually, he merely maintained himself as Governor of the Sikh Durbar with the title of Ameen-ul-Mulk which meant 'Governor'.

The siege of Hariparbat was raised on the evening of 24th October. Finding that Sheikh Imam-ud-Din had no real intention of preventing the passage of Kashmir into Dogra hands and was simply delaying the transfer, to secure personal benefits, the people were demoralised.

1 PGR Book 176-70, p. 149.
2 PGR V. IX Sr. No. 217.

Shops were closed in Srinagar and people began fleeing the city and suburbs to remote villages. Faqirullah left for Rajouri, his home town, with a force of 1,000 men and released Zorawar and Kashi Nath, the Kardars of Gulab Singh, who had been earlier taken prisoners, and offered submission if restored to his jagir. He then wrote a letter to Lt. Edwardes that he was prepared for submission as soon as the latter reached Rajouri. In another letter addressed to the Maharaja's Maulvi, he offered to submit provided the latter got him "the Maharaja's necklace as a pledge of good faith". Both the conditions were agreed to and attended by 30 prominent men of his tribe, he made his submission on 18th October 1846. On persuasion from Edwardes, Gulab Singh promised to release the Bhimber Raja who was in jail since three years and also a son of the Kishtwar Raja, interned in Reasi.

On 6th October, the Adjutant General of the army ordered Col. Reed, commanding at Ferozepur, to march his troops to Lahore. Major General Sir John Littler was ordered to Sialkot while Lumsden was sent to Rajouri to remain with the Sikh forces to ensure that "they did not get derailed". Brigadier Wheeler commanding the field force was ordered to Bhimber. 20 days ration for the Europeans and 15 to 20 days for native forces was also issued. A few days before Imam-ud-Din's eventual departure from Srinagar, a huge army, composed of the elements already described, left Lahore for Srinagar and the most remarkable spectacle was that Her Majesty's Agent at Lahore, Col. Lawrence was marching at its head to put the vendee of human flesh into possession. One part of the army consisting exclusively of white soldiers marched under the personal command of Lawrence himself and included Lt. Edwardes, commander of the English forces at Lahore. Another force consisting exclusively of the Sikh army was sent under the command of Sardar Teja Singh, a personal friend of Gulab Singh. Still mistrustful on account of the Khalsa army's natural hostility towards him and suspicious of its ultimate role in the battle-field, Gulab Singh thought it imprudent to leave them alone and, therefore, marched with them at the head of a 4,000 strong force exclusively drawn from his clan. The forces headed by Gulab Singh and Lawrence got together at Reasi and thence marched together to Srinagar. As Imam-ud-Din was already on way to Lahore, Major General Littler and Brigadier Wheeler returned to the plains.

A last desperate effort to resist the passage of the Vale into Dogra hands, seems to have been made by local Muslims but due to the treachery of one Malik Kaul of Shopian, Gulab Singh was able to appear at the outskirts of Srinagar without advance knowledge. The small and hastily-collected band of patriots, thus gathered to give him battle, was out-

numbered and defeated.[1] The local Muslims were, easily subdued and over-awed. Gulab Singh entered Srinagar on 9th November, 1846, at 8 A.M. The astrologers had suggested the time and date as auspicious for his entry. Imam-ud-Din's family had vacated Sher Garhi two days earlier. To avoid them in the way, Gulab Singh made a detour and instead came to Pampur where he joined Lawrence who had thought that the Dogra might, as Sovereign, desire to enter Srinagar alone but:—

> "the meeting at Pampur led the British Agent to imagine that the Maharaja was willing to sink his dignity in the increased opinion of the British support which his formal accompaniment would afford His Highness."[2]

Holding a naked sword in his hand, at the time of his triumphal march in the city, he said, "This sharp sword alone shall now decide the fate of Kashmir".[3]

On the very day of their entry into Srinagar, Lawrence, conscious of his role in the enslavement of the people of Kashmir by their entrustment to the care of a tyrant like Gulab Singh, in a letter urged him "to act on the advice orally given" and reminding him in a friendly manner that "two things are absolutely necessary for the stability of the State; first, that all grades are treated with consideration and kindness, and second, that a sufficient army is maintained." He advised the Maharaja "to fix a light assessment so that the peasantry may be contended; customs on goods to be collected only at one point, either on the frontier or in the city of Kashmir." He also advised the Maharaja of the "impropriety of personally having mercantile dealings." He also told him that "carriers should not be impressed and that some rules should be made for their protection, that the rights of Jagirdars should be maintained; that provisions should be made for the exiled Rajas and above all, *that all* creeds should be treated alike".[4] Lawrence had earlier told Gulab's Vakil at Lahore that firing villages in the territory of Faiz Talab Khan "was not the way to obtain a character for humanity".[5]

Raja Sher Dil of Khakha—Bamba tribe who ruled over Buniar and the Vakils of three chiefs submitted by 12th November. Sher Dil's jagir was maintained to the extent of rupees 2,500 and a

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1 Rashid Taseer, p. 49.
2 PGR. Pl. V. IX. S. No. 1001.
3 Walter Lawrence, p. 64.
4 PGR Sr. No.7 457, Book 176.
5 PGR Book 13, item No. 30.

further jagir of rupees 3000 was granted in Kashmir but the rupees twenty thousand jagir granted by Imam-ud-Din was cancelled. By 15th November, all chiefs had made their submission. Jagirs as they stood in March, 1845, were maintained.

THE TRIAL OF LAL SINGH

Sometime after the departure of Sheikh Imam-ud-Din, who placed in the hands of Lawrence, the letters written to him by Raja Lal Singh, Prime Minister of the Sikh kingdom, the British Government decided to bring him to trial on the charge of having attempted to obstruct the implementation of the Lahore and the subsequent Amritsar treaties relating to the transfer of Kashmir and other territories to Maharaja Gulab Singh. Apart from having written these letters, Lal Singh had taken other steps as well, so far as he could, to prevent the passage of the territory into the Dogra hands. It has been already noticed that Rani Jindan was strongly opposed to the transfer and had very clearly brought it to the notice of Col. Lawrence and other English officers. In view of her opposition, the transfer was an arbitrary act on the part of the Governor-General, devoid of any constitutional or moral authority. Lal Singh can, therefore, be said merely to have carried out a policy laid down by his Sovereign. Rani Jindan did not say at any stage that she was either agreeable to the transaction or that the Prime Minister had acted against her policy or directions. On the contrary, she seems to have even begged for his release. She remained faithful to him to the last. It is stated that his removal from Ministership and subsequent banishment from Lahore, was:—

> "rendered necessary by his intimacy with the Queen mother, who, laying aside even the last appearances of matronly modesty, had abandoned herself to alternate ravings and intrigues—now imprecating, now imploring the Sardars, the British Resident, in fact anybody, to restore her love. But it was considered quite inconsistent with the peace of the Punjab that the Rani and the late Wazir should both remain in it."[1]

Jawahir Singh who had been deputed by Lal Singh to Ramgarh and Jasrota to hand over these forts to Gulab Singh's agents, took too long to reach there. It was also claimed that when, as a result of British pressure, Hakim Rai was sent to Srinagar to ask Imam-ud-Din to hand over possession, he had been secretly instructed to tell him not to leave his post. Hakim Rai and Sohan Lal who was

1 Sethi, p. 17.

accompanying him on order from Major Macgregor, Deputy Commissioner and Political Agent of the Trans Sutlej territory, took 19 days to reach Rajouri; it should have normally taken five to six days only. It is also claimed that he had been secretly instructed to tell Imam-ud-Din to keep up his opposition.[1]

A special Court was constituted by the Governor-General to try Lal Singh. It consisted of the following:

1. Frederick Currie, Secretary to the Government of India: .. *President.*

2. Lt. Col. H. M. Lawrence: .. *Member.*

3. Mr. John Lawrence, (brother), Commissioner Jullundhur : .. *Member.*

4. Major General Sir John Littler: .. *Member.*

5. Lt. Col. Andrew Goldie: .. *Member.*

There was a proper trial as understood. A large number of Sardars were present in the Durbar Hall which had been converted into a court room. There was examination and cross-examination of the witnesses. The witnesses against him were Sheikh Imam-ud-Din, Lala Rattan Chand, Confidential Agent of Imam-ud-Din, Lala Puran Chand, Vakil of Imam-ud-Din and Diwan Hakim Rai, Confidential servant of the Lahore Durbar. Diwan Dina Nath appeared as a defence witness.

He was found guilty and removed from the Wazarat. He was first interned at Agra and then at Dehra Dun in winter and Mussorie in summer on a monthly pension of rupees two thousand. He died in 1867 while still in internment.

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1 *Ibid.*, p. 17.

accompanying him an order from Major Macgregor, Deputy Commissioner and Political Agent of the Trans-Sutlej territory, from the 29 days to reach Kashmir he should have normally taken 9 ... days only. It is also claimed that he had been secretly instructed to tell Imam-ud-Din to keep up his opposition.[1]

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1 Ibid., p. 17.

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CHAPTER VI

Liberation of Gilgit

In 1847, part of Pathankot and Sujhanpur were retransferred to the British in lieu of a pension of rupees 62,200 that Gulab Singh agreed to pay to the disinherited Rajas of Rajouri, Jasrota, Ramnagar, Basohli and Kishtwar. They settled in the Punjab, under British compulsion, so as to allow Gulab Singh a free hand.

The first problem that Gulab Singh had to tackle was the resistance sporadically offered by descendants of Chak warriors popularly known as Galwans. They were banished, as a community, to Boonji in Astore where they had little freedom even during day time. Allotted small pieces of land, they were expected not only to maintain themselves and their families with its produce but also the large number of their captors. Starvation, disease and unfamiliar climate exterminated them not long afterwards.

In 1847 Sultan Hussain Khan who had succeeded his uncle Zabardast Khan, captured Kahori and expelled its ruler, Najaf Khan. It appears that he had already established independent links with some British officers at Lahore. Aware of the family's incessant struggle against Sikhs, Gulab Singh was too shrewd to let the opportunity be lost. Najaf Khan who was equally keen to enlist his support, was invited to Srinagar. Determined, as a matter of fundamental policy, not to do anything which might displease even a single whiteman, Gulab Singh seems to have realised, in view of Hussain Khan's personal links at Lahore, the risk involved in a direct military assault against him. The plan therefore devised was that a deputation comprising leading men of the area wait upon the British Agent to the Governor-General and complain of the "excesses"

committed by Hussain Khan. Consequently, twenty "notables" including Mir Noor Mohammad, Mir Dost Mohammad, Hamza Khan, Mir Malik, Syed Wasif Ali Shah, Mir Nasir Malik, Sheikh Munshi Saleh and Choor Khan met the Agent at Lahore and made a representation against the 'tyranny' of Sultan Hussain Khan, as tutored by Najaf on the advice of Gulab Singh, a past master in the art. The Agent was taken in and as Gulab had probably anticipated, wrote to him for redress!

وہی قاتل ، وہی مخبر ، وہی منصف ٹھہرے
اقربا میرے کریں خون کا دعویٰ کس پر

Trans: When the assassin, the reporter and the Judge is the same person;
Against whom shall my heirs bring the charge of murder.

Thus armed with authority by his overlords, Gulab Singh invaded the territory, forcibly dispossessed Hussain Khan, after slaughtering a number of people who offered resistance, and then handed it over to Najaf Khan, vide a 'Sanad' dated August 1854 and still in possession of the family. Apart from the fact that Najaf Khan's authority to rule, now proceeded, as per Sanad, not in his own right but as a feudatory of the Maharaja, the interesting part of the episode is that the Dogra demanded a sum of rupees twenty-five thousand in cash as a "special consideration" for what he had done. Najaf Khan could not afford the amount and had therefore to raise it by creating sub-jagirs, thus also enabling Gulab Singh to use them against him as well as against each other. Sultan Hussain Khan's own territory was temporarily left undisturbed. It will be recalled that Zabardast Khan and his nephew had been a source of continuing trouble for the Sikhs and at one time, their forces pushed them out of the whole area upto Srinagar and but for the lack of decisive and resolute leadership capable of peeping into future, perhaps may have put an end to their rule long before the sale of the territory. Therefore, after consolidating his hold over the Valley, Hussain Khan was summoned to Srinagar and forced to sign an agreement, providing for an annual State grant of rupees twenty five thousand in perpetuity in lieu of the surrender of the Jagir. The English were again helpful by granting Hussain Khan a jagir in Pakhli, district Hazara. The payment of the annuity was stopped after his death on the pretext of the failure of the male line of descent, although on the British side, the jagir was inherited by his nephew.

According to the treaty of Amritsar, the territory sold to Gulab Singh comprised only the mountainous country, with its dependencies situated east-ward of the river Indus and west-ward of the river Ravi.

Gilgit being clearly on the north of the Indus, could by no rules of interpretation be considered as having also been included in the sale. The British Government appointed several officers to demarcate the boundary of the territory transferred under the treaty. To Gilgit side were sent Lt. Vans Agnew and Lt. Young, later Col. Ralph Young, Commissioner in the Punjab. They were kind enough to demarcate the line in accordance with the wishes of the rich and 'hospitable' Maharaja and added to his dominion even areas north of the Indus, including Gilgit. Again it was at the cost of the Sikh kingdom because apart from the territories transferred to the British under the treaty of Lahore, the rest of the Sikh kingdom was for the time being left intact. It may be pointed out that a man like Gulab Singh who, according to the Punjab Adventurer, "is hardly able to sign his name, he looks after his own accounts and often has the very grain for his horses weighed out before him", behaved like a reckless and extravagant host for all those Englishmen and women who set their foot on the State soil whether as tourists or on official business. According to the author of Letters from India and Kashmir, "From the late Maharaja (Gulab Singh) and from the present ruler, Englishmen had received unvarying kindness and hospitality. In no country were they treated with greater or perhaps equal consideration."

Gulab Singh, after entering Srinagar, sent for Col. Nathu Shah from Gujranwala and appointed him Governor of Gilgit which was by that time still in the hands of the Sikh Durbar. Nathu Shah hurried to Gilgit at the head of a large Dogra army; the Sikh garrison, already demoralised by the first Sikh war and its tragic consequences and also on account of having served under him previously, elected not to fight and surrendered possession of the territory. Nathu, however, acted shrewdly by offering, on his very appearance, re-employment, under his command, to the entire Sikh garrison, which in the circumstances prevailing at the time, was gratefully accepted. The frontier stood between Shah-Kaiot and Gulpur in the main valley and somewhere above Chaparot on the Hunza river. While Agnew and Young were in Gilgit, they desired to pay a visit to Hunza which was refused by the Ruler of the small kingdom. Soon afterwards he attacked Gilgit and captured five villages. According to Drew, the Raja justified his breach of peace by claiming that "Nathu Shah had broken faith with him in bringing the Farangis to see the country". Nathu Shah retaliated and accompanied by Karim Khan, the nominal ruler of Gilgit under Sikhs, marched against Hunza. A fierce battle was fought near Hunza river resulting in the defeat of the Dogras. Col. Nathu Shah and Raja Karim Khan were both killed alongwith a large number of their followers.

One Gauhar Aman, the legendary Hero of the area whose exploits have descended from generation to generation through folk-lore and whose overpowering image personifies his people's fierce love for freedom, then ruled the small principalities of Punial and Yasin. Like many others, he must have read the writing on the wall and understood its ominous implications. He seems to have realised that salvation and security lay not in surrender but resolute, determined action. He also seems to have come to the conclusion that offence was the best way of defence against the Dogras who were still new to the area and had supply problems too. He joined hands with the people of Hunza and succeeded in persuading the people of Darel to join his forces and leave their centuries-old mutual quarrels to be settled through war or peace at leisure and meet the common enemy as a united force. The appeal sincerely addressed, went straight to their hearts. The combined force then marched upon Gilgit. The local Muslims were already in secret alliance and therefore the fort fell easily and the whole area stood cleared of the Dogras.

Gulab Singh sent two armies, one from Hasora and the other from Baltistan. There was some fighting but they came to terms without much loss to either side and for a while peace reigned on the basis of the state of things as they existed before.

This is how we enter the year 1851. One Sant Singh, a Dogra, was then commander of the Gilgit fort; some miles away at Naupura was another fort commanded by Ram Din and garrisoned by Gurkha mercenaries; one Bhup Singh was in command of the Reserve at Boonji and Astore. While Gulab Singh was in Srinagar, the Muslims of Chilas rose in revolt and attacked Astore. As the winter had already set in, not much could be done to suppress them. However, in early spring, Gulab Singh again came to Srinagar and personally supervised the despatch of an army under various commanders, among them being Diwan Hari Chand, Wazir Zorawar of Kishtwar, Col. Bije Singh, Col. Jawahir, Lochan Singh and Diwan Thaker Dass. The rebels took refuge in the fort. According to Hashmatullah, the fort was defended at night by men and during day-time, by women who were well trained in the art of war. In the meantime, a force stationed at Single under the command of Devi Singh was attacked by the local inhabitants. The Col. ran for safety. At Chillas the Dogras made a desperate bid to capture the fort but had to retreat after losing about 1500 men (?), including one of their important commanders, Kamidan Gegra. Col. Bije Singh was wounded. As the siege protracted for months, the water reserves in the fort were exhausted. For three days the besieged defenders went without water and showed great endurance. At last when the thirst became unbearable, they opened the

gates and, with the few out-dated and crude weapons they had, fell upon the invaders with the result that almost every male among them died fighting. The Dogras put the fort on fire and combed the whole area, causing great destruction and misery. Many boys from the leading families were arrested and sent to Jammu to be detained as hostages.

Sant Singh and Ram Din took extremely repressive measures to administer the areas. This increased the hatred and hostility of the local inhabitants. Gauhar Aman had, by that time, considerably consolidated his position and was becoming the rallying centre of the anti-Dogra movement. A dashing young man and a born soldier, he could both lead as well as inspire confidence. Mr. K. M. Panikkar has described him as "the stormy petrel of the frontier". He wished to see the Dogras expelled. From folk tales it appears that since his last encounter with the Dogras, he had been secretly sounding men of influence in the entire region to join him in an united effort to snatch away their freedom from the Dogras and it also appears that he had largely succeeded in eliminating their mutual rivalries.

On account of the excesses committed by Sant Singh and Ram Din, there were clashes between the occupation troops and the local inhabitants. It also appears that some of the victims went to Gauhar Aman and sought his help. Already on the look-out for an opportunity, he surrounded both the forts and as the first step towards their eventual capture, cut off their mutual contact.

Bhup Singh advanced at the head of some 1200 soldiers for their assistance. After crossing the Neela Dahr, a ridge that separates the two valleys, when he reached the bank of river Gilgit, he found the narrow space between the water and the alluvial cliff, blocked. Here the path rises 2 to 3 hundred feet high by a narrow galli. They had barricaded every possible channel of access; they had built sangars across every galli that led to the higher ground. The Dards had also managed, by passing along difficult mountain paths, to occupy the rear of the Dogras so that a retreat was made equally difficult. The river on their side was very fast and deep. At the same time, the people from Hunza also assembled with their crude weapons. Bhup Singh was thus faced with a difficult situation. He could neither advance nor safely retreat. The Dards then promised him provisions of which he was very short and guaranteed a safe retreat. For several days he kept waiting in the expectation of supplies as the Dards kept him feeding on hopes that these were on their way. After 7 days the Dogras were attacked from all sides. The Hunza people fired from the left bank while Gauhar Aman's men sent a storm of bullets and stones

from above. Nearly a thousand died on the spot and a hundred or two were taken prisoners. The place has since come to be known as 'Bhup Singh Ki Pari'.[1]

While the force commanded by Bhup Singh was thus exterminated, Gilgit and Naupura remained under siege. A force of about three hundred soldiers managed to leave the Gilgit fort and tried to go to the succour of the garrison at Naupura but most of them were cut to pieces in the way and only a handful succeeded in entering the fort. When the siege continued for a longer time than they had expected, the garrison came out and, in the ensuing battle, about three hundred Dogra soldiers were killed and the remainder taken prisoners.

The same pattern was repeated in Gilgit where the entire garrison, most of whom comprised Gurkhas, were killed except a lone Gurkha woman who was able to reach Srinagar, obviously through the chivalry of the Muslims, inhabiting the long and difficult route.

With the fall of Gilgit fort, Gauhar Aman now became the undisputed master of the whole of Gilgit including what later came to be known as the Gilgit Agency, distinct from Gilgit proper.

From 1852, when these events took place, upto 1860, for eight years, the position remained unchanged and the Maharaja's boundaries below Haramosh, remained at the Indus, above Haramosh, that is in Baltistan, he possessed the country on both sides of the river. A considerable force was stationed at Bunji. According to Mr. Drew:

> "It seems to have been Gulab Singh's fixed policy to advance no farther."

The reasons are not far to seek; the area north of Indus was actually not included in the Treaty of Amritsar and this fact was being loudly emphasised in the British parliament as well as in the British press; Lord Hardinge had been recalled and replaced by Lord Dalhousie who being a fresher from England, was fully conscious of the growing criticism at home against the sale of Kashmir and had taken certain measures, though minor, to have at least a better say in the administration of Kashmir. Gulab Singh had not as yet succeeded in establishing himself securely in the Valley. There were still some Muslim groups who, despite their knowledge that Britain had installed him over their heads and that he had at his back the support of the biggest empire ever established in human history, had the courage and conviction to challenge his authority. It was on account

1 Drew, p. 185-86.

of these circumstances that Gulab Singh seems to have chosen to abandon Gilgit. There is no doubt, however, that one of the reasons that must have influenced him in coming to this decision was Gauhar Aman's quality of leadership, his knowledge of the territory and undoubtedly his superiority as a military commander.

It will be recalled that Sultan Khan, the ex-Raja of Bhimber who had assisted Ranjit Singh in his invasion of Kashmir in 1819, had been rewarded by the Sikhs with a small jagir between Bhimber and Rajouri. It will be also recalled that Gulab Singh had, for some time, been in his employment. Gulab now thought of getting rid of his old master and employer. The Sultan was therefore invited to Jammu and after being blinded with a hot iron rod, he was thrown into Gajpat fort where he died after an internment of nearly ten years.

TAYLOR IN KASHMIR

Being extremely greedy, Gulab Singh resorted to a policy of excessive taxation, perhaps because he had not only to make the payment of the sale-price but might have also wanted to make as much profit as possible. Although the territory had been transferred to him in perpetuity, on account of the shamelessness of the transaction, it seems he was not sure of retaining it. The first victims of this policy of repressive exactions were the shawl-makers of Srinagar. Their stocks were seized; their houses and shops searched and part of what fell into the hands of the tax-collectors, deposited in the treasury. The result naturally was that the shawl-makers who ought to be distinguished from the labourers engaged in the trade, had no alternative but to close down their shops and abandon the trade. The first to be thus affected were the labourers engaged in the trade.

Sometime after the treaty of Amritsar, Lord Hardinge visited Srinagar for a short rest and 'shikar'. Gulab Singh took the opportunity of paying the debt of gratitude by extending lavish hospitality. He also tried his best to keep the Governor-General busy in shikar and confine his visit to less-inhabited beauty resorts so that the Camp did not come in contact with the local Muslims but despite all these precautions and friendly disposition, the Governor-General had towards him, he could not perhaps effectively suppress his conscience even from what little he saw of the wretched condition of Muslims.

A British official, Lt. Reynell Taylor, Assistant to the Resident at Lahore was deputed to Srinagar to investigate the grievances of Muslims.

1 Taylor, p. 48.

He was accompanied by another British officer, Mr. Melvill. According to Syed Hassan Shah,[1] soon after his arrival, a meeting of the Muslims of Srinagar was convened at the Mai-Suma Maidan on 21st June. After addressing the meeting, Taylor enquired whether they were well-governed and whether they wanted Gulab Singh's rule to continue. Gulab Singh and his officers had taken care to bribe a few leading Muslims. According to Mr. Bamzai, Pandit Raj Kak Dhar, the son of Pandit Birbal Dhar, with whom we are already acquainted as an active collaborator with the Sikhs, had worked very hard and the result of these efforts and precautions was that the people present in the meeting told Mr. Taylor that they were content with the Dogra rule. However, it seems that despite efforts to prevent Muslims from attending the meeting in strength, there was no dearth of courageous individuals who were prepared to speak out the truth. Taylor himself records that the following questions were asked in the meeting:

(1) Whether the British Government were the heirs to Kashmir?

(2) Whether the two officers had full powers to do whatever they liked?

(3) Whether in the case of complaints, they were to interfere authoritatively to procure redress or were just to intercede?

(4) Whether they could guarantee the subsequent safety of those who came forward with substantial complaints.

Taylor had nothing positive to offer and did not even guarantee the safety of those who were prepared to speak out the truth. It is better to let him narrate himself what he told them in reply:

> "The Maharaja was king of the country and likely to remain so; that we could do nothing but recommend and intercede etc.; but that I believed our advice would meet with attention."[2]

He succeeded in persuading the Maharaja to dismiss Diwan Karam Chand. He cites an instance which shows the state of maladministration, insecurity and army excesses: Two Dogra soldiers who were travelling in the countryside joined a civilian who was also travelling in the same direction; as soon as they were sufficiently out of town, they drew a blanket on his head to overpower him easily, gagged his mouth, killed him on the spot and ran away with his belongings. Taylor apprehended them and put them to death.

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1 Tarikh-e-Hassan, p. 568.
2 Punjab Political Diaries, p. 42.

Of the situation in Kashmir, Taylor says:—

"I said to Jawala Sahai that though all these arrangements (which Taylor suggested) were very good and that I knew you would be pleased with them, still unless the King of himself formed the determination of governing justly, no permanent good could be expected from it; that of your (Resident at Lahore) wish and that of the Governor-General would be that the Maharaja should govern his own country so justly and well as to render it unnecessary to depute British officers to enquire into the affairs of it and advise him on every little point. On a subsequent occasion, I told him *that the conduct of the Maharaja caused the Governor-General as much anxiety as anything in British India, not war*, excepting Lahore *and asked him whether he could understand that the reason of this was that by the right of victory, the country had been for a certain time in his possession and was then entrusted to the Maharaja and if it afterwards appeared that by that act he had made over a whole people to a harsh and oppressive ruler, both his Queen and the people of England would blame him very much for it*, though, of course, *at the time he would have had no idea of the character of the man to whom he gave the kingdom and certainly could not have supposed that he would exact more from the people than the proverbially oppressive Sikhs*."[1]

ہا ئے اس زود پشیان کا پشیان ہونا

On 12th July 1847 he presented certain proposals regarding the control of prices, introduction of food rationing in Srinagar, regulation of Shawl industry and framing of rules governing local and frontier jagirdars.

According to Taylor, four thousand shawl-weavers went on strike on 6th July 1847 in protest against heavy taxation and the oppression and corruption of tax-collectors. They also demanded higher wages. They left on foot for Lahore via Shopian. By the time they reached Shopian, their numbers had considerably dwindled. Taylor went in person to Shopian and persuaded them to return to Srinagar. Some of their demands were accepted.[2]

When Gauhar Aman rose in revolt in Gilgit, Gulab Singh asked Taylor whether he should send a force *and take Gauhar Aman's country for the English*. Taylor declined the offer but did not object to his supporting the post attacked.[3]

1 Punjab Political Diaries, p. 70.
2 Taylor, p. 48.
3 Taylor, p. 85.

DEATH, DESTRUCTION AND HEAVY TAXATION

On 9th June 1847 Col. Henry Lawrence and George Taylor wrote a letter to Gulab Singh complaining of:

(1) distress of Kashmiris on account of high prices of shali and high-handedness of his officials;

(2) occurrence of four cases of satti;

(3) despatch of forces by the Maharaja to Gilgit; and

(4) the imposition of taxes on Kashmiri Muslims for construction of temples and their maintenance.

During this period Kashmir was visited by a number of foreigners, some of whom have recorded their observations and impressions which are being reproduced below to enable the reader to form an independent opinion.

Dr. Thomas Thompson, Assistant Surgeon Bengal Army, who visited Kashmir in 1852-53, has said:—

"Above Gond the Valley of the Sind is very poorly inhabited and deserted villages and abandoned cultivation showed that the population is diminishing....Nor should it be forgotten when we compare the accounts given by earlier travellers with the impressions made upon us by the present appearance of the Valley that Kashmir is no longer in the same state as it was in the days of the (Mughal) emperors; a long continuance of misrule under a succession of Governors whose only interest it has been to extract as much revenue as possible from the unfortunate inhabitants having produced the only conceivable result, in abandoned cultivation and an impoverished people."[1]

According to Mrs. Hervey, who was in the State sometime before 1851 when her book was published, boats paid from Rs. 2/- to Rs. 40/- as tax and if unpaid, the boat was seized and sold in auction.[2] Says she:—

"Everything appears to be heavily taxed in Kashmir and every person too—the artisan and the manufacturer too. The people are in a state of squalid poverty and the country swarms with beggars. There are an immense number of children and the land is prolific inspite of its poverty—perhaps as in Ireland, in consequence of it."[3]

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1 Western Himalaya & Tibet, p. 275 & 286.
2&3 Adventures of a Lady, p. 117 & 121.

She paid a visit to the once prosperous town of Kishtwar. Says she:—

"There is but little to say about Kishtwar; once a large and important town,—its better days are past. There are not more than 150 houses, most of them mean-looking, one-storeyed houses. The fort is barely garrisoned and two-thirds of the population of the district have "nussghia" (to use the phraseology of the people of the country) on account of the great oppression that prevails."[1]

Cow-killing continued to be punished with death. John B. Ireland, the American globe-trotter, saw the corpse of a prisoner who had been hanged on a charge of cow-killing. He appears to have maintained a day-to-day diary. He writes:

"The country is badly cultivated and almost depopulated by the tyranny that has existed for some years past. I have passed but one village today and that about two hours ago. Reaching this place, a small town, I find the usual resort of travellers occupied by the Raja's troops—a cut-throat loosing set of noisy rascals.

This evening P. . . . , who has been here nearly a year on sick leave, has been reading extracts from his journal, incidents and matters. He has seen, and heard from his friends who have seen or known about them. Among other matters, the avarice, oppression and cruelty of Goolaub Singh, who is admitted to be the wealthiest man in India, and which he has scattered all over the country for safety. Part is in a secret place in the fort at Jamoo, which was constructed a few years ago, and to preserve the secret, the men who built it were destroyed.

Wood is a monopoly, belonging to Government. On the birth of every lamb, the owner must pay a tax of one anna (3 cents, a full-grown sheep being worth about 36 cents)—the birth of a calf is four annas. For a marriage one rupee (50 cents, 11 days' wages). Every shop in the city pays a tax of three annas a day. A fishing boat four annas a day. Walnut trees ten annas a year for the oil, and if the crop fails must be made up with Ghee (a kind of butter). It is computed that seven-eighths of the land produce reaches Goolaub's pockets.

The shawl-manufacturers pay thirty-three per cent of their value, in addition to the raw material which comes from Ladakh in Tibet, paying three hundred per cent duty, on coming into the country.

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1 Adventures of a Lady, p. 286.

After the grain is harvested, it must be stacked and remain, until the government assessors report and the King chooses to fix the rate of the tax. Sometimes it is two or three months. In the meanwhile the poor wretches, if they have none of the old crop left, are obliged to subsist on turnips (almost the only vegetable) and herbs.

A month or two since, an officer, in passing through the country, saw in one of the villages, three persons being punished because the donkey of one had broken loose and eaten from a stack of grain, and the other for taking a little from one of their own stacks before the stack had been assessed.

The first was punished by having his hands tied tightly together over a stick, and then hung on the branch of a tree, the bit of stick resting on the branch; the blood was flowing from his nails. The other two were tied back to back, and each obliged to hold the other on his back for a certain number of hours, and if he allowed the man on his back to touch the ground, he was severely flogged.

Two or three months ago another had his carpet bag cut open, and 150 rupees taken out. Suspecting his boatman, he made a complaint against him, and he was taken in custody, and it was afterwards ascertained that a confession was extorted from him (it happened to be true one in this case, he being the culprit), by an incision made in his side, and chillies and red pepper put in until he confessed and restored the property.

A year ago, three Sepoys were flogged to death for killing a cow. No native dare appear before the King in a handsome dress, for fear the King will beg it away. He has been known to beg a dress from a Nautch dancer."[1]

Major-General Ralph Young was told by Badri Nath, Chief Justice, that death sentence was awarded for cow-killing because 'the crime was most heinous'.[2]

The soldier's pay, according to the General, was Rs. 5/- Chilki per month which meant about Rs. 3/- of the English coin; payable in 3 monthly arrears, generally, it was not paid regularly. The result was obvious. They were free to make exactions from the people. Says the General:—

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1 From Wall Street to Cashmere, p. 396 to 398.
2 Papers of Major General Ralph Young (India Office Library).

"When moving about the country, their expenses are small as they indent largely upon the 'generosity' of the villagers. God help the villagers."[1]

In one recorded instance, the soldiers "paid" one Chilki rupee for 44 seers of flour and five goats.[2]

According to Lt. Robert Thorpe, a contemporary who is credited of having been acquainted with the Kashmiri language, out of every 32 traks (trak=six seers) of the spring crop, the following quantities were exacted from the peasant:[3]

Government share	..	20	traks	0	seers
The Surgowl	..	0	,,	1½	,,
The Shugdur	..	0	,,	1	,,
The Tarougdar	..	0	,,	¾	,,
The Hurkara	..	0	,,	1½	,,
The Putwaree	..	0	,,	1½	,,
Servants of the Kardar	..	0	,,	½	,,
Total:—	..	21	,,	¾	,,

Again, as per Thorpe, taxes in cash were also realised against crops, in addition to above quantities in kind. Details given by him are:[4]

Wheat 32 traks	..	3	Chilki	annas
Barley	..	1½	,,	,,
Peas	..	1½	,,	,,
Tilgoglo	..	3	,,	,,
Dals	..	3	,,	,,
Moat	..	1½	,,	,,

1 Papers of Major General Ralph Young (India Office Library).
2 Rifle in Kashmir, p. 57.
3&4 Thorpe, p. 13, 14, & 15.

Out of each 32 traks of the autumn crop, the following was taken away in taxes:[1]

Government share	.. 21	traks	2	seers
Temple tax	.. 0	,,	2	,,
Juloos-us-gowl (Maharaja's guests)	0	,,	2	,,
Putwaree	.. 0	,,	1½	,,
Hurkara	.. 0	,,	1½	,,
Shugdar	.. 0	,,	1	,,
Surgowl	.. 0	,,	1½	,,
Servants of Kardar	.. 0	,,	¾	,,
Tarougdar	.. 0	,,	1½	,,
Total:—	.. 23	,,	1¾	,,

which comes to more than 72% of the produce.

Other taxes on the autumn crop detailed by him are:[2]

Rice (Shali) on 32 traks	.. 2¾	Chilki	annas.
Maize	.. ,,	,,	,,
Trombu	.. ,,	,,	,,
Shawal	.. ,,	,,	,,
Pinqi	.. ,,	,,	,,
Kupas	.. 4	,,	,,

Other taxes in force at the time were:[3]

1. Rassudar: A tax on each house at the rate of annas four to annas twenty, according to the number of the inmates.

2. Fruit: Walnut, apple, pear, apricot, almond, etc., ¾th of the produce taken away.

3. Animal tax: From every village producing 500 Kharwars (1,200 maunds, each Kharwar being equal to 2 maunds and 16 seers) of grain, 2 or 3 sheep or goats at half their price.

4. Ponies: One pony from each such village at half its price.

1&2 Thorpe, p. 13, 14 & 15.
3 Thorpe, p. 16, 25 & 56.

5. Pattu or warm home-spun woollen cloth: One blanket per 500 Kharwars.

6. Ghee: For each milch cow: ½ seer of ghee per annum.

7. Fowls: From 1 to 10 fowls yearly per every house, according to the number of its inmates.

8. Honey: Two-third produce,.

9. Upto December 1867 every shawl-maker had to pay Rs. 47½ annually per labourer. It was then reduced to Rs. 11/-.[1]

10. Land sale: 4½ annas per rupee of the amount of consideration.

11. Marriage tax: Rs. 3/- for the first marriage. In the case of 2nd or 3rd marriage, etc., it increased upto Rs. 100/-.

12. Boatmen: A boatman whose pay was Rs. 2½ or above per month was also taxed.

13. Sale of girls for prostitution. Rs. 100/- was realised for permission to sell a girl and another Rs. 100/- for permitting her into prostitution.

14. Prostitutes: They paid an annual tax of Rs. 80/- to Rs. 100/- per head.[2]

15. Custom duty on the import of rice in Srinagar city was annas two per rupee.

16. Horse tax known as Zar-i-Nakas: It was 50% of its price.

17. The Ekkas plying on the Sialkot-Jammu road paid Rs. 2/- and annas ten per Ekka.

Most of these taxes were either abolished or reduced during the reign of Pratap Singh on the persistent intervention of the British Government.

The Dogras introduced in Jammu a system known as Leri which enabled the Government to adjust the pay of a sepoy against the taxes

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1 & 2. Thorpe, p. 16, 25 & 56.

due from his family. Similarly, Dogras were required to provide a sepoy or an official per ten houses and on his desertion, a substitute had to be provided.

When Hardinge was replaced by Dalhousie, Gulab Singh was naturally anxious to establish personal contact with him because all through his life, the strategy of friendship at the top had paid him rich dividends. Sir Henry was helpful even here. In 1850 when Dalhousie visited Wazirabad, Sir Henry went in person to Jammu and brought the Maharaja first to Sialkot where he was received by Napier, the Commander-in-Chief and together they came to Wazirabad where he met the new Governor-General on 23rd December, 1850 and what is more important, must have availed of the opportunity to render personally a detailed account of his treachery to his masters—the Sikhs—and the "services" thus rendered to the British. It was on this occasion that his gun-salute was raised from 17 to 19.[1]

Two river crossings in Poonch were named after Ram and Lachman as Ram-pattan and Lachman-pattan. Both are Hindu mythological deities. According to Mr. Panikkar :

> "It is of special interest to note that instead of copying the English words of command or maintaining the Mughal words, the Maharaja had the same coined in Sanskrit. The names of his regiments were also taken from Hindu tradition. Thus there were the Gobarbhan (Goverdhan) Regiment, the Rhugunath (Hindu god) Regiment and the Lachman (Geeta Hero) Regiment."[2]

THE DOGRA ROLE IN 1857 REVOLT

When the first war of independence broke out in 1857, the Maharaja made a cash donation of rupees ten lacs[3] to the British and sent a contingent comprising two thousand infantry, two hundred cavalry and six guns[4] under the personal command of his son, Ranbir Singh. While the force was still on its way to Delhi, news reached of the 'serious illness' of the Maharaja; the contingent was thereafter commanded by Dewan Hari Chand, who was killed during action in Delhi where they arrived on 8th September, 1857 and fought against Bakht Khan.[5] He also offered the hospitality of Kashmir valley and the protection of his arms to the English women and children in the plains during the war. A contemporary not only confirms the donation of ten

1 PGR, V. XII, p. 218.
2 Panikkar, p. 140.
3 Hashmatullah, p. 64.
4 Lord Lawrence by Hunter, p. 96.
5 Lucullus, p. 34 & 56.

lacs but also reveals that Gulab Singh sent five thousand soldiers to maintain order in the Punjab. Of the Kashmir contingent, eighty-seven officers and men were killed and wounded while 80 died of disease. Their names are preserved in the Punjab Government Record Office.[1] The contingent which was later commanded by Major Mocatta, returned to Jammu after the failure of the revolt with praise for its good behaviour and attachment to the British Government.[2] A contemporary writes:

> "It should be remembered that there was a Kashmir contingent of several thousands which fought bravely at the time of the final assault, and to a considerable extent drew off the pressure from the direction of Kashmir Gate where the real attack was to take place."[3]

Soon after the failure of the revolt, the Governor-General went to Srinagar and expressed to Gulab Singh his readiness to move his Government to grant him more territory as a reward.

The British Government rewarded each member of the entire contingent with a cash award of rupees ten.[4] As for Ranbir Singh himself, his father having died in the meantime, the Queen conferred upon him, in 1862, the title of the Most Exalted Star of India and his gun-salute was raised from 19 to 21. The title of Bazoo-i-Sarkar (the Prop of the British Government) was also conferred upon him.[5] The Queen also sent him presents and a very complimentary letter through the son of Henry Lawrence.[6] It may be mentioned here that Sir Lawrence while breathing his last, was heard to say: "see that they don't malign me."[7] Had the ignoble sale of Kashmiris seized his conscience? As Ranbir Singh declined to accept Bhatta for the contingent that had fought in Delhi, he was granted a sum of rupees one lac as a Khilat.[8]

Two thousand rebels from Mardan entered the State during the revolt. They were arrested and handed over to the British authorities while British women and children were looked after in Srinagar.[9] A group of soldiers entered Samba and made several raids on British-held territory in Sialkot area but were repulsed and severely dealt with.

Years earlier in 1849 when Sardar Chattar Singh Attariwalla who had revolted against the British, entered Kashmir through Hazara, Gulab Singh arrested more than a thousand and made them over to the British.[10]

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1 PGR. File No. 52-4 POL. Departt.
2 PGR V-XIII, p. 508.
3 Neve, p. 17.
4 Kashmir & its Prince, by Jogendra Chandra Bose as quoted in Condemned Unheard, p. 43.
5, 6, 7, 8 & 10 Lucullus, p. 57, 62, 56, 55.
9 PGR Volume XIII, p. 529.

Records Drew from personal experience :

"With the customary offering of a rupee as nazar, anyone could get his ear; even in a crowd one could catch his eye by holding up a rupee and crying out 'Maharaj', 'arj hai' that is "Maharaja, a petition". He would pounce down like a hawk on the money, and having appropriated it, would patiently hear out the petitioner. Once a man after this fashion, making a complaint, when the Maharaja was taking the rupee, closed his hand on it and said, "No, first hear what I have to say". Even this did not go beyond Gulab Singh's patience; he waited till the fellow had told his tale and opened his hand, then taking the money he gave orders about the case."[1]

Lt. Col. Torrens has made the following observations :

"This last State was worst than the first, for Gulab Singh went beyond his predecessors in the 'gentle' act of undue taxation and extortion. They had taxed heavily, it is true, but he sucked the very life-blood of the people. They had laid violent hands on a large proportion of the fruits of the earth, the profits of the loom and the work of men's hands, but he skinned the very flints to fill his coffers."[2]

Even Panikkar, the official biographer, could not help, in the light of overwhelming and unimpeachable evidence, and had to make the following admission :

"Gulab Singh did not achieve his ends by methods which were always beyond criticism. He did not hesitate to resort to tricks and strategy which would in ordinary life, be considered dishonourable. He was trained in a hard school where lying, intrigues and treachery were all considered part and parcel of politics."[3]

This is what Mr. Lepel Griffin, another contemporary, has said of the Dogra brothers :

"There are perhaps no characters in Punjab history more repulsive than Rajas Dhyan Singh and Gulab Singh; their splendid talents and undoubted bravery only render more conspicuous their atrocious cruelty, their treachery, their avarice and their unscrupulous ambition."[4]

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1 Drew, p. 44-45.
2 Travels, p. 301.
3 Panikkar, p.
4 Griffin, p. 19.

He didn't spare even Buddhist monasteries. The following taxes were imposed upon them :

			Rs.
(1)	The monastery at Hemis	..	900
(2)	at Chimra	..	900
(3)	at Thiqse	..	500
(4)	at Pitak	..	500
(5)	at Gawan	..	900
(6)	at Lamayuru	..	900

25 small monasteries were taxed at the rate of Rs. 25/- each. The tax on houses in the northern areas fetched Rs. 45,000/-.[1]

Gulab Singh seems to have considered the British as invincible. There is an interesting anecdote. In course of one of their meetings, after he had been put in possession of Kashmir valley, he asked Lawrence who was writing something :

"Lawrence Sahib, why *is* it that the English in the end, always conquer, even if at first all goes against them"?

"I am afraid I cannot explain that just now, I must finish this report."

"But there must be *some* reason," Gulab persisted, "I greatly want to know."

Pressed in the midst of work, Lawrence inscribed on a blank piece of paper the three letters—"I.H.S. (Jesus the Savior of men)", pushed it without a word towards the puzzled Maharaja and went on writing. Gulab took it for some sort of Abracadabra, ensuring victory. So he stamped them, for luck, on his coins.[2]

In a despatch to the Resident at Lahore, the official news-writer wrote from Srinagar that a woman who had been bitten and whose

1 The building of J&K State.

2 Maud Diver in Honoria Lawrence, p. 314-315.

clothes had been torn by a cow, inflicted an injury on the animal's tongue; the woman was summoned by Prince Ranbir Singh on whose orders her tongue was cut off and her hair shaved off. She was later exhibited throughout the five parganahs of the Valley as a warning to others. The Resident asked Maharaja Gulab Singh to explain the cruel incident.[1]

After the Prince succeeded his father, the Punjab Government received reports that the tongues of a number of women had been cut off. The Governor-General called for a report from the Maharaja.[2] Details are not available. It is also not known whether the subsequent incidents which took place in 1865 were attributable to the Government or private individuals. It is more probable that these women were subjected to rape and torture and their tongues were cut off to conceal the identity of the criminals, most probably Government functionaries or army personnel.

On advice from Lawrence, Gulab Singh, apart from promising to treat Hindus and Muslims alike, also undertook that custom would be levied only on the border, that annas two per day would be paid to a labourer for begaar, and that the army would be paid every two months, the following salaries:

(1) Soldier	monthly salary	Rs.	8
(2) Kamidan	annual salary	Rs.	750
(3) Colonel	annual salary	Rs.	1,500[3]

Gulab Singh was afraid and may have had reports that Amir Dost Mohammad was planning an invasion of Kashmir to annex this territory to Kabul. He, therefore, made representations to Sir Hurrie Bart, the British Resident at Lahore. At the same time, the British were not satisfied with his conduct. Therefore, the following (unpublished) letter was sent by Secretary to the Government of India to the Resident on the 19th of January, 1849 :

"Hon'ble Sirs,

1. With reference to your demi-official letter to the Governor-General, wherein you mention being in consultation with Major

1 PGR V. XIII Serial No. 249, p. 60.
2 PGR V. XXI Serial No. 681, p. 158.
3 PGR Register 176, p. 164.

Mackeson, as to what communication should be made to Maharaja Gulab Sing in the alarm which he feels regarding the possible loss of Cashmere and other portions of his territory, I am instructed by the Governor-General to request that you will intimate to the Maharaja that the British Government will not permit Dost Mohammad Khan to take possession of any territory belonging to His Highness, provided His Highness gives decisive proofs that he may be depended upon as a friend to the British Government and a special neighbour. The Maharaja has hitherto given no real proof of his trust-worthiness and amity—for His Lordship cannot regard as such a proof his sending a few thousand Rupees to Captain Abbott when His Highness owes several lakhs to the British Government.

2. If the Maharaja shall really do effective service against the Sikh army now in arms against the British Government or against Ameer Dost Mohammad Khan, in the event of that person attempting to aid the Sikh army, the Governor General requests that you will assure the Maharaja that the Ameer will not be permitted to injure him. If on the other hand, the Maharaja does not render such service, it is impossible that the British Government can place any reliance on his friendship, and they will proceed to take such measures against the Sikh power, against Dost Mohammad Khan, and the Maharaja himself, as their own interests and security may seem to require.

3. The British Government sincerely desires to see Maharaja Gulab Sing retained in possession of all his territories, and in friendship with it—and the Governor-General counsels him now to take a just view of his own true interests, and to act in accordance with that view."[1]

Captain A. Cunningham, Commissioner Tibet Front, whom we have already noticed as having advised Zorawar not to attack Lhasa forces in winter, spent some time in Kashmir and sent the following memo to the Resident regarding the local conditions:

1. "During my stay in Kashmir, I observed on several occasions that the Maharaja, Gulab Singh, had, either directly or indirectly, a complete monopoly of all the chief products of the country, such as saffron and wheat (rice) and the shawl and iron manufactures. Even walnuts did not escape him, as I found a house filled with them at Gagangir on the Sindh river which was closed up under the Maharaja's

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1 PGR.

seal. The lacquered work such as pen-cases, toilet boxes etc., was also partly monopolized as I purchased one dozen of the former and a few of the latter from the Maharaja's agents.

2. The saffron was cultivated by the Maharaja himself, and I found the saffron fields of Pampur carefully watched by Chuprasis from the Government Thanahs. It is even said, but I confess that I cannot credit it, that the soldiers have once been employed to pick the saffron crops.

3. The wheat (rice) is I believe wholly obtained in payment of revenue, and I was informed that until the Government stock was sold, the grain merchants throughout the country were prohibited from purchasing grain from any one else. To prevent any infringement of this order, the Government grain is doled out in small quantities to the grain dealers, and it is consequently impossible to obtain so much as one rupee's worth of wheat in the city of Kashmir.

4. The shawl and iron manufactures are I believe almost wholly under the Government. I purchased three shawls myself and I discovered that two of them belonged to the Maharaja, and that the third had just before been purchased from the Government by a Muttani trader.

5. The iron-work, for which Kashmir has always been justly celebrated, has fallen off so much that it now forms but a very inferior portion of the manufactures of the Valley. The whole of the smiths, I was informed, were employed by the Government at low fixed rates of daily wages, as was also the case with the shawl-weavers.

6. The effect of this all but universal monopoly of the chief products of the country has certainly been to curtail the annual amount of produce, and to lessen both the export and imports,—Of this I had myself a direct proof—On my arrival at Leh I found eleven Yarkandi merchants there, and from them I obtained a complete list of all the articles exchanged between India and China by way of Kashmir and Ladakh, which were said to be annually falling off in quality as well as in quantity. The next day when I was preparing to elicit further information from these Yarkandi merchants, I found that they had all left Leh for Kashmir to present a petition to the Maharaja against Thanedar Bustee Ram, the Governor of Leh. Their cause of complaint was that the Thanedar had taken a quantity of their goods, for which he tendered them inferior saffron at a fixed price much beyond its market value. The Thanedar immediately despatched an order by

the post to the guard at the bridge head at Kalatsi on the Indus to arrest the merchants; and they were accordingly stopped there. But so much were they in earnest, and so great must have been their loss, had they taken the saffron at the rate insisted upon, that two of them boldly plunged their horses into the Indus, and succeeded in landing on the opposite bank, although they were swept rapidly down the stream for a considerable distance. They were in Kashmir during the whole period of my stay in the Valley, but as the saffron belonged to the Government, their petition of course received no attention, as the complaint was in reality against the Maharaja himself. A decrease of the commerce must naturally follow such an arbitrary proceeding; and the merchants declared that they would never enter Ladakh again. The whole trade of the country must of course suffer when the Government interferes so directly with it."[1]

The Resident at Lahore asked Gulab Singh to allow the setting up of a news post at Bhimber and set up similar posts from Srinagar to Bhimber so that happenings in Kashmir could be reported at Lahore within 4 days. It was thought that the knowledge that anything which might happen in Kashmir would be known at Lahore within four days, might have a salutary effect on the cruel conduct of the Maharaja.

In 1856 Gulab Singh installed his son Ranbir Singh on the throne; the reason for advancing his succession was his fear lest the sons of Dhian Singh should come forward with a counter claim and receive the assistance and support of the British. Gulab Singh himself retired to Srinagar partly to consolidate his hold on the Valley and partly to improve his health. He had an attack of dropsy in 1857 from which he was not able to recover and died at Srinagar in August, 1859. Fifteen hundred persons accompanied his ashes from Jammu to Hardawar where these were immersed into the Ganges.[2]

GILGIT SUBJUGATED AGAIN

The first British Political Officer, designated as Officer on Special Duty, was appointed the same year. He was George Buhler, since renowned for his pioneering research on Sanskrit. He collected as many as 800 Sanskrit manuscripts from Kashmir valley. In early eighties, the designation was changed to that of 'Resident', with Sir Oliver St. John taking up the post as the first Resident.

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1 PGR.
2 PGR, V. XIII, p. 564.

In 1860, Ranbir Singh despatched a large army under the command of Col. Devi Singh Naraina to reconquer Gilgit and its adjoining areas. Many years preparations had gone into the building of the special task force; this time even heavy pieces of artillery were included in the arsenal. Before the arrival of the force in Gilgit, Gauhar Aman died a natural death in Yasin; his death almost coincided with the arrival of the Dogra army. On their way, they encountered some resistance at Astore. The death of Gauhar Aman not only greatly disheartened his forces and the local inhabitants but also deprived them of a leader, whose stock was high even with his adversaries; left without effective leadership, the resistance offered was anything but determined. The Gilgit fort was besieged by the Dogras; their heavy guns burst open its gates and after a little resistance, they captured it. The army then advanced towards Yasin. The inhabitants had already fled to comparatively safer places. The Dogras placed on the throne Azmat Shah, a first cousin of Gauhar Aman and returned to Gilgit, considering it impolitic and impracticable to hold on to Yasin. Azmat Shah who was immediately expelled, took a shorter route and was in Gilgit even before the arrival of Col. Devi Singh. At the same time, the people of Yasin, Punial and Darel frequently harrassed Dogra picquets. So, early in 1863, another force was despatched under the command of Col. Hoshiara. The inhabitants withdrew to Morori-Kot which is about a day's journey higher up the valley. This time, the Dogras went in their pursuit and defeated them. Raja Mulk Aman fled to the hills. Women and children remained locked up in the fort and after over-coming the resistance that remained, the Dogras entered the fort and did as they pleased. Many a women were taken prisoners and carried away to Gilgit. In 1866, the leadership of the Resistance movement was taken over by the ruler of Hunza. There had been traditional hostility between the Rajas of Hunza and Nagar. A force was despatched to subdue Hunza, but as the advance progressed, the porters and guides from Nagar began deserting one after the other and before the Dogras could reach Hunza, they became suspicious and disgracefully fled back to Gilgit. They were ambushed and scores lost their lives.

This retreat, even without a fight, gave encouragement to the local Muslims and once again, like the year 1852, were witnessed feverish preparations on a national level to expel them from the region. Inter-tribal rivalries, mutual distrust and enmity between the ruling families were forgotten for a while and the people of Yasin, Nagar, Punial, Darel and Chitral joined hands and collected a sizable army led by Iman-ul-Mulk, the Raja of Chitral. It was able to reduce most of the forts in Punial, including the more important at Gakuj, and Bubar. They advanced towards Gilgit and besieged the fort, whose inmates had, on account of advance knowledge of the impending attack, already

stored considerable provisions. News of the revolt having reached Srinagar, reinforcements were sent expeditiously under the command of Zorawar and Col. Bije Singh. On the banks of Indus at Bunji, they encountered some resistance by the local Muslims which was easily overcome and the force continued its advance towards Gilgit. When news of the reinforcements being close at hand, reached Iman-ul-Mulk, he foolishly retired to Chitral without even giving a fight. Mr. Drew, commenting on the retreat, has said, "the whole confederation had melted away. Thus different was the conduct of it from the energetic action of the Yasin troop who fourteen years before succeeded in expelling their enemies from the Gilgit valley".

Zorawar and Bije Singh were anxious to accomplish something more. Therefore, they led an expedition to the interior of Darel and captured four out of its seven forts. Most of the people living in their surroundings as well as its inmates had withdrawn and removed themselves and their families to higher altitudes. As the expedition had started in September, it was over-taken by snow on its return, resulting in considerable loss particularly to the ill-clad Kashmiri porters. In 1867, the people of Yasin invaded Punial and besieged the fort at Bubar. However, before it could be taken, Bakhshi Radha Kishan appeared with reinforcements from Gilgit and the irregulars had to retire.

ATTEMPT ON RANBIR'S LIFE

There is evidence that Gulab Singh wrote several letters to the British Government (Lahore) expressing grave apprehensions about the activities of his nephew Jawahir Singh but was assured that he was under strict surveillance.

Relations between Jawahir Singh and Ranbir Singh remained sore. The former was claiming half of the kingdom on the ground that it was mainly through the instrumentality of his father that Gulab Singh had been installed at Jammu. As Ranbir was not willing to share power with him, he was afraid that Jawahir Singh may contrive his removal by getting him assassinated or poisoned. The fears were not unfounded. In 1860 A.D. an abortive attempt was made on his life during a shikar excursion but it failed because the rifle developed some defect. A large number of persons were arrested and punished. One Shadi

Khan, Commander Gulaboo and Linke Kamidan were hanged and their houses raised to the ground. Mian Hattu was imprisoned in Dodah fort. A son of Gulab Singh, born to a concubine, he appears to have been against the ascendency of the Punjabi Hindus under the patronage of the family of Diwan Jawala Sahai who hailed from Emanabad (Punjab). Bajar Dev was banished to the frontier. A Rajput from Kahna Chak was imprisoned at Askardu. All except Shadi Khan belonged to Ranbir's own clan. However, not all those arrested were aware of the conspiracy or had anything to do with it. The incident was used, by various officials, as often happens in despotic regimes, to remove from their path rivals or potential rivals. Jawahir Singh died in Ambala soon afterwards, perhaps an unnatural death.

A Khansama, Salar Bakhsh also seems to have been employed by Jawahir Singh to assassinate Ranbir. This was probably to be done at Lahore, on one of his visits to the city. The plot was discovered in advance. Salar Bakhsh was tried by the Commissioner Lahore Division and sentenced to seven years rigorous imprisonment and a fine of rupees one hundred.[1] He was later transported to Andaman via Karachi to undergo the sentence.[2] Details of the plot or court proceedings are not available.

In 1929 Bik (1873 A.D.) there was a serious Shia-Sunni riot in Srinagar. The Shias constructed a wall which was demolished by the Sunnis and some Shias were looted. The riot started from the shrine of Makhdoom Sahib; 690 houses were burnt. Wazir Ratnu is reported to have said, "Well, put them ablaze." It was like adding fuel to fire. Then came the army and made some arrests. Rupees three lacs were paid to the Shias by the Government as compensation. In 1932 Bik. (1876 A.D.) a huge fire engulfed Tankipura in Srinagar city, consuming a large number of houses. The outstandings of rupees 7 lacs were remitted.

During the reign of Ranbir Singh, each English visitor received a present of two sheep, two fowls, 14 little earthen dishes containing rice, butter, spices, eggs, flour, fruit, honey, sugar, tea etc., all of which was laid at the door of the visitor in great pomp and ceremony by a host of attendants.[3]

On the death of a Britisher, the Maharaja provided a shawl to wrap the body in. Knight and other visitors were invited to a parade

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1 PGR V. XVIII Serial No. 288, p. 78.
2 PGR V. XVII Serial No. 298, p. 81.
3 Captain Knight, p. 82.

of 2,000 regulars held in Srinagar, attended by Ranbir Singh, with "colours flying and bands playing" "Home, Sweet home"![1] The Captain and other English visitors were invited to a dinner and dance show. It seems to have been a normal practice. Wrote Knight :

"Considering that our entertainer was a Hindu, each person had to bring his own knife, fork, spoon and chair."

The guests were then entertained to music and dance at which one of the dancers[2] sang "the Marseillaise"! Employees from Mian Rajputs, the ruling clan, were given a rupee more as pay than others. Similarly, Gurkhas also received one rupee per month as enhanced pay. No soldier or constable could call on the houses of Mian Rajputs, whatever the nature of duty and if a Mian Rajput was found guilty of murder, he could not be sentenced to death.[3]

CONTEMPORARY PRESS COMMENTS

What was the general economic condition of the people during the early period of the reign of Ranbir Singh and much before the great famine of 1877, is described by the contemporary "Indian Public Opinion", a newspaper then published from north India and quoted in the book "Kashmir Raj" itself published more than a century ago, in 1868 :

"We sacrifice hundreds of valuable English lives on the fever-stricken coasts of Africa to guard against the extinct evils of the slave trade, and at the same time we exalt among the princes of India the great slave-holder who owns, not a gang but a national bonds-men. We decorate him and point him out to his peers as the ruler whom England delights to honour. It cannot be concealed that Cashmere is one vast slave worked plantation. The passes are jealously guarded against the tide of fugitives which yet annually escape into the British provinces. Throughout the year the villagers, men, women and children, are turned out each morning at the sound of a drum to work in gangs under alien task-masters, at a husbandry of which they are not to reap the benefits. When ripe, the crops of each village are stored in open air or granaries strictly guarded; and when, after many weeks and even month's delay, the whole produce of the country

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1 *Ibid.*, p. 91.
2 Captain Knight, p. 88.
3 Hargopal Khasta, p. 206.

has been duly calculated and valued, the grain is "doled out in quantities just sufficient to keep life and soul together" to use the words of Colonel Markham.

And in the Valley itself, when dying from the scarcity which had afflicted the land, they sought a substitute for their usual food in the fish of their rivers, they were met by a stern interdict from their rulers. And why were they thus debarred from the resources which nature offered them? Because their Hindoo masters in their puerile superstition chose to give out that the soul of the late Maharaja Golab Singh, had suffered transmigration into the body of a fish. Hence this source of supply was interdicted to the whole people, happy at least that His Highness' soul had fixed upon a definite place of residence, for, at least the whole animal kingdom, fish, flesh and fowls was tabooed to them. *An English officer, passing upto the Jhelum in his boat during one of those years of famine, observed three half starved natives chained naked on the bank of the river at a desolate spot, many miles from any habitation. Each of them wore a necklace of stinking fish, and they had been left thus for three days and three nights already without food or drink. What was their offence? They had been driven by hunger to catch a few fish, in defiance of the interdict, and had been found out.* While thus the Maharaja does not accept the responsibility, acknowledged even by the slave-driver of America, of providing with sufficient food to those whom he holds in bondage and who enrich him by their labour, he in addition, taxes them in every particular that is capable of taxation. Every fruit tree as it ripens is guarded and its produce taken over for Government. Every hunter has to pay tribute in kind of the proceeds of the chase. Every one who wears ornaments beyond the common, or clothes better than the roughest, is marked down for plunder by the rapacious officials. *On one occasion, noticing a bracelet on the wrist of a village head-man, an English traveller asked whether it was of Silver. All the bystanders burst into laughter, while the wearer anxiously assured him that it was only lead adding, "silver"! why, how should men wear silver in the country of the Maharaja ?"* At the village Atwat, where the remains of terraces of the hill affirm that there formerly dwelt a race of chiefs sufficiently rich to own elephants, the sole inhabitants are now an old man and his wife. A few trees of walnuts now remain near his house. These few are still assessed at the full tax which was formerly demanded when all the trees were standing. Three times has he escaped into the mountains abandoning both land and house, and three times has been brought back by emissaries from the different officials, who had promised that he should be released from a tax on property which had no existence. Each time he was deceived, although the engagement was

made in writing. "Now", he told his enquirer, "I am too old to fly again : but the Maharajah won't get much more from the walnut trees of Atwat ; for I shall not last much longer ". *From October till March no European is suffered to witness the state of the people, but of this long "winter of discontent" stories ooze out in each returning spring, when the rough work of annual oppression has somewhat abated and the country is again considered presentable to civilized eyes. One considerable item of this chieftain's revenue is derived from a traffic which most countries endeavour to conceal, but which flourishes openly and avowedly in Cashmere. The class engaged in it are owned as slaves by others who were formerly in their position. The authority of the latter is backed by the whole power of the Maharajah, to whom reverts at their death all the wealth gathered during their infamous life.* Should one of their bonds-women attempt to leave this degrading profession, she is driven back with the lash and the rod into her mistress's power. These facts are certain. *Here is a prince fit to be decorated with the Star of India! A worthy knight for an Order of which our Queen is the head!* The owner of a whole nation, he sucks his riches from their life-blood, and stops to draw a degrading revenue by pondering to their vices. Each Nautch girl dances in his service, every cajolery she bestows on her admirers, every gift she extorts from their liberality, is for the benefit of the Maharajah's treasury. To complete the picture, imagine a chief as insolent to British power as he is hard to this people whom he holds in bondage. No Englishman may come into Cashmere except by two or three prescribed routes. No Englishman may visit certain parts of his dominions. Every Englishman must leave them before the end of October in each year. He might not take Cashmeerees who are in his service beyond the frontier. *After this it will excite no surprise, when a Medical Missionary visited Serinuggur, sentries were posted on the bridges and the streets to prevent the sick from going to him to be cured* of their diseases."[1]

The same newspaper, commenting on the conditions in Kashmir, wrote in its issue of the 23rd November, 1866:

"Who that has visited the beautiful Vale of Cashmere has not heard of the extortionate exactions, the grinding tyranny and oppression, of the enormous revenues under the name of Customs and other dues literally "screwed out" of the inhabitants of the Valley by the Maharajah's myrmidons.

Not only is the entire land produce most heavily taxed, but the people also. If we are to believe the accounts we receive, betrothals,

1 Lucullus, p. 18 to 22.

marriages, births, deaths, Mahomedan religious ceremonies, agriculture, manufactures, trades, professions, service, commerce, labour, social customs, even the "social evil", are all made to yield a revenue, and nothing escapes the Argus eye and vulture propensities of the Cashmere Government and its officials. Imports and exports are alike burdened with exorbitant duties. Traders are subjected to vaxatious delays and extortions. Where the taxes are formed, the evil is only intensified. The contractors plunder the public, and the Maharajah's Government eventually plunder the contractors, under the excuse of penal fines for mismanagement, misconduct, and oppression. If every pass in the surrounding mountains were not held by guards, the population of Cashmere would long ere this have fled from the fearful oppression to which it is subjected. If this picture had been overdrawn and over-colored, we shall be glad to receive contradictions from any of the numerous English officers who visit the Valley every year. But the facts appear to be notorious. The Government cannot be ignorant of them.

Sir Robert Montgomery, then Lieutenant Governor of the Punjab, visited Jummoo and Cashmere for the express purpose of inducing the Maharajah to forego the fearful exactions, reduce the customs duties, and to control and modify the horribly oppressive tendencies of his system of Government. Whatever may have been the promises made by the Maharajah, if we may judge from recent information which is believed to be founded on fact, Sir Robert's mission has failed in attaining its object.

It is true that we sold Cashmere to the late Goolab Sing ; but we surely did not sell its people into slavery. And we have no doubt that in the worst days of the Slave Trade, the condition of the Negroes of the West Indian sugar and cotton plantations, and of the Southern States of America, was very much better than the lot of the Cashmeerees has been and still seems to be. But, be this as it may, the Maharajah of Jummoo and Cashmere is our feudatory; and we are morally, if not politically, responsible for the grave evils arising from the barbarous system of misgovernment, which places extensive and abused power in the hands of underpaid and unscrupulous officials, and which is tacitly permitted, if passively disapproved of, by us".[1]

Given below is an account given by Arthur Brinckman in this book "Narrative of A Shooting Excursion" :

"The Pandits have all the authority in Cashmere and consequently

1 Kashmir Raj, p. 97.

are not very much beloved by the rest of the inhabitants who are always telling English sportsmen how happy the country would be if the Sahibs would take and govern it. To a certain degree, the people are ill-treated here, but the Raja is not as much to blame as are his subordinates, the Pandit Kardars. He seems to care for little except his army and treasury; and he may be to a certain extent, ignorant of the way his poorer subjects are treated. Every thing is thrown in the way of their advancement in the civilization. Every thing is done to prevent the wretched people improving themselves in any way."[1]

"Any one travelling in Cashmere, remarks how badly all the inhabitants are dressed, the reason being this; if a zumeendar cleans himself, and wears a white pugree, he is instantly accused by his Kardar of being rich and is doubly taxed accordingly. So it is the policy of all not to look respectable, to be shabby is the fashion of the place. The people are entirely at the mercy of these men. If they complain, it is with difficulty that they get a hearing, and if their complaint is against a Pundit, they might as well complain of the Rajah himself. The reason that Europeans are not allowed to remain here in the winter, is because it is the season of oppression."[2]

Lt. Colonel Torrens, who visited Kashmir immediately before 1860, records :

"Each succeeding race of conquerors seems to have pulled the reins of despotic rule and unjust taxation tighter and tighter, till in 1846, after the Sutlege campaign, Cashmere was under our auspices, handed over to the tender mercies of Goolab Singh, 'in consideration of a pecuniary equivalent' to be his independent succession; *and its sovereignty is now a source of weakness rather than strength to the great Government which sold five millions of men for so many bags of silver.*

An intelligent native official at Sreenuggur told us, that whereas the father had been "greedy of pelf, and pelf alone", the son, "though quite conscious of the advantages of a huge exchequer," was "hungry after organization", "Sherista-ki-bhooka".

Kashmir is literally overrun by Hindoo faqueers, detested by the people they prey upon, but supported and encouraged by the Govern-

1&2 Brinckman, p. 113 & 114.

ment, and their numbers are rapidly increasing. Their appearance is loathsome in the extreme, and they are generally to be seen stalking about, or basking in the sun, stark naked, their long hair matted with filth, and their bodies smeared with woodashes. This state of neglect and dilapidation is visible in all the Mohammedan buildings in the country; while on every side Hindoo temples are being erected. Hindooism has invaded the Tukht-i-Suliman itself; and there, on the very site of a Mohammedan shrine, has it erected a place of worship."[1]

Even catching of fish was prohibited and many Muslims were imprisoned for violation. The reason was that the Brahmins, in continuation of the Hindu theory of the transmigration of soul, declared that Gulab Singh's soul had entered a bee! A few weeks later, some Brahmin reported that a bee had been eaten up by a fish. The incident is described by Torrens, who visited Srinagar those days, in the following words :

"Ghulab Singh, instead of becoming a mistletoe, as he richly deserved was turned after death into a bee, so said the Pundits ; a decree went forth in consequence throughout the length and breadth of the land, that bees were henceforth sacred and must not be destroyed (whether the eating of honey was also forbidden, I am not prepared to say). But this bee, though endowed with the soul of the deceased monarch, lacked his wary shrewdness; for one hot summer's day, when buzzling languidly on the surface of a cool stream, he was snapped up by a hungry fish poor insect Jonah. But the soul of Ghoolab could not die, and therefore now inhabited a sealy tenement. The Maharajah's papa was a fish !!!

The result of this vile priestly fabrication was the prohibition of fish as food; for the pious son was fearful lest some irreverent Moslem hook, with sacrilegious bait, should lure this royal fish—

"Great Ghoolab's self now turned to fish,
Might haply form a dainty dish
For fisherman or boy,"

a catastrophe that would sadly interfere with the future transmigrations of that restless spirit. Fancy the orthodox soul of a deceased Maharajah dwelling in a heretic body of a Mahommedan fisherman.

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1 Torrens, p. 300.

What would become of the Moslem's soul? Would it object to the intrusion, or fraternize and amalgamate with the new comer? It is a difficult question, and one which I suppose puzzled the Pundits; so they decided on preventing the possibility of their having ever to answer it, and thenceforth is was not lawful to eat fish."[1]

The edict prohibiting the catching of fish is also mentioned by Cowley Lambert whose book was published in 1872.[2]

LT. ROBERT THORPE : FIRST FOREIGN MARTYR.

During the reign of Ranbir Singh, one Lt. Robert Thorpe visited Kashmir and, as recorded by Father Biscoe:

> "His mind was soon directed to a more important matter, namely, the sorrows of the Kashmiris under maladministration. He found the peasants, who were Mohammadans, suffering terribly under the rule of Hindu officials who sucked the very life-blood out of them. They paid their taxes in kind, the State claiming half the crop and the State officials who collected the grain taking a quarter or more.
>
> There was such an army of Hindu officials whose duty it was to collect the grains that when all had been supplied, both lawfully and unlawfully, there was very little left for the Zamindar (peasant) and his family who had farmed the land. Often it happened that the farmer and his family had to live on roots or anything they could find on which to exist."[3]

The Lieutenant was deeply moved; the realization that all this sad state of affairs had been brought about by his Government, must have weighed heavily on his mind. So he made it his duty to collect information regarding the persecution of Kashmiris and this he conveyed not only to the Government of India but also to public opinion by regularly writing to the press. As recorded by Father Biscoe:

> "However, trouble came upon him and he was ordered out of the country, and because he refused to go, he was bound to his bed and carried towards the pass by sepoys. He, however, managed to escape and returned to Srinagar ; but it was of no avail, for, next morning he died of poison after his breakfast."[4]

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1 Travels, p. 317-18.
2 Cashmere and Ladakh.
3&4 Kashmir in Sunlight and Shade, p. 234-239.

He was the first in the long line of martyrs from outside the State who laid down their lives for the freedom of Kashmiris. He lies buried under a stately chinar tree in the British cemetry at Sheikh Bagh, Srinagar.

Who was this martyr?

In 1833,[1] an Englishman Lt. Colonel Thorpe entered Kashmir as a tourist. While camping at Tosha Maidan, he caught sight of a girl, Jani, daughter of one Daim Rathore, belonging to the Muslim royal family of Kishtwar. Reported to have been of exceptional beauty, the Colonel fell in such desperate love that he had to embrace Islam in order to get her hand. She accompanied him to England. Robert Thorpe was their third child. The attachment to Kashmir inherited through his mother, must have been deepened by the tales of pathos and deprivation of Kashmiri Muslims, he heard from his mother while being mothered to manhood. It is quite natural that these accounts coupled with his own observations of his mother's mental strain resulting from her long separation from the land of her birth and relations, must also have had a deep impact on his mind. The result was inevitable. He left England for good and after a brief sojourn in Bombay and Delhi, entered Kashmir as a tourist. He was least interested in Nature that has always lured the visitors. He travelled extensively in the villages, collecting data about the misgovernment of the territory. His articles created a sensation. He wrote to top British officials at Calcutta and Lahore. Evidently, they asked for explanations. It was the 22nd of November, 1868 when he was found dead on Takht-e-Sulaiman. According to Taseer, he had been strangulated. His book on the conditions of Muslims of Kashmir which was published in London two years later in 1870 and is composed of the articles contributed by him to the press, unmistakably shows his deep attachment to the cause of his kinsmen. Writing about the wretched conditions of the labourers employed in the Weaver industry, he said:

> "Those gaily-coloured threads of wool are not the only ones which these looms weave to their completion. Threads of life, more costly than those of the softest pashm, whose price will be demanded by Heaven yet, are spun out there on the loom of sickness and suffering. Death or flight are the only doors of release open to the heavy-laden shawl bafs ; and thus we have arrived at an understanding of the causes which have produced those extensive emigrations of the Cashmere shawl bafs to the Punjab. But the latter alternative is only possible to a man in tolerable health and strength, since the difficulties to be encountered, including the guarded outlets of the Valley,

1 Taseer, p. 54.

are many and great. Many of the fugitives make their way over remote and difficult mountain passes, others by temporarily attaching themselves to an Englishman's camp—one way—or another they contrive to reach the Punjab in considerable numbers, and find, in exile, a refuge from the Maharajah's officials of the Daghshali. Is it not almost incredible, that the Government of India has only to say a word to restore these unhappy beings to their homes, and happiness and comfort to hundreds and thousands of suffering families through Cashmere, and will not say it?"

Coming to their migration, he says:—

"Consider the half-despairing feeling of one of those refugee shawl bafs, as he prepares to fly like a hunted felon from his wife and children; for to take them with him is, of course, an impossibility. How many a miserable hour must he have known, debating with himself, whether, what must have been undergone, in most cases, before he can bring himself to leave the dear ones of his home with the uncertainty of ever beholding them."[1]

"A difficult and dangerous path before him, the possibility of capture and imprisonment, the uncertainty of what he shall meet with in that unknown land which he has heard of by the name of the Punjab, which they tell him the 'sahibs' rule over, and do not suffer the poor to be oppressed. The journey across the mountains is, indeed, easy enough for an Englishman, with his camp and all its comforts and appliances; but what is it for one of these unfriended outcastes, with scanty supply of clothing, food, shelter, and the dread of capture and punishment continually before his eyes?

The English traveller, as he pauses on his pleasant journey towards Cashmere, and looks up at the bright snow-clad summits towering above him, and perhaps thanks God if he have any gift that way for making this earth so beautiful, heeds not that other aspect of the world, which the pale, worn figure hastening him might reveal. He flies like a hunted felon, as I said, and his crime is poverty."

Speaking of their character, Thorpe testifies :—

"Of these fugitives I have learnt that *they are in the habit of sending supplies of money to their families, as occasion offers, by some trader or other returning to the Valley and I am told that the confidence thus placed is never abused. Surely this one fact speaks volumes in favour of the Cashmere character in regard to those two qualities, which they*

1 Cashmere Misgovernment, p. 36. (I.O.L. London)

certainly exhibit in a marked degree (considering that they are an Asiatic race) namely, honesty and loving-kindness."[1]

I never yet heard of an Englishman having had anything stolen by a Cashmeerie, and have very rarely heard of theft among themselves. In their villages, anyone who may have become incapacitated from old age or sickness, and who has no near relations to look after him, is supported by the community. In the cities, especially in Srinagar, food and money are given to all of the poor who may come to ask for them from the houses of those who are tolerably well off. On the 11th of every month, as well as on all their sacred days, and especially on the occasion of the Ede, and throughout the month of Ramazan. *It were easy for me to multiply instances of this and other traits in their character worthy of admiration, but these pleasanter aspects of Cashmerees are somewhat foreign to our immediate purpose, nor have I at present, time to speak of them.* To return therefore :

The family of a refugee shawl baf is by no means left in peace ; for, according to Hindu ideas of justice, infraction of the law by any member of the community implicates all his relations. The karkander, of course, immediately informs the darogha, in order that his tax may be decreased. (Which is not done, however, until the end of the year, even in case of death. *Thus if a shawl baf dies in the first month of the year, the karkander pays tax for eleven months for a dead man, and when the name of the defunct is at last erased from the Daghshali list, the officials of that admirable institution make the karkander pay a fee to them in honour of the occasion*).

The darogha sends a sepoy to the house of the fugitive, and wife or mother or father, or probably all of them, are brought up before the Daghshali."[2]

Giving his observations about Begaar, he says :

"I crossed the Kumori pass, which leads from the Gurais into the Astor Valley, in October, 1867. It was covered with snow for many miles on the Gurais side, and for two days' journey on the Astor side. I saw no human habitation for at least three days in crossing from one Valley to the other, and no shelter of any kind. (Except that when I crossed there were the remains of a few wigwams put up by troops, who had passed three or four days before, and which could be destroyed by the first storm). I myself, with servants, coolies, tents, etc., and the advantage of fine weather, had some difficulty in the

1 *Ibid.*, p. 37.
2 *Ibid.*, p. 38.

pass. We were shelterless by twilight in the middle of the snow at great elevation, and only succeeded in reaching a spot where tents could be pitched, by observing a part of the mountain side which we could descend rapidly, and thus reached a spot of ground free from snow as darkness came on.

Some troops had crossed a few days before me, and the number of dead tattoos by the side of the track bore witness to the difficulty they had encountered.

But it was in the month of November that these zemindars were sent up to Gilgit, where the pass must have been considerably worse, and they were sent without the slightest provision for their shelter, clothing, or food, beyond the loads of rice which they carried on their backs. How many died, it is of course impossible to say. What Hindu Government would ever think of recording the names or numbers of those who had died in their service?

Picture to yourself, oh reader! those desolate scenes where the Cashmere zemindars had to lay down their lives! None save those who have seen such, can fully realise their horrors. No imagination is powerful enough to realise them! the waste, hopeless aspect of the unbounded stretch of snow; the intensely keen blast of the wind, which strikes you with the force of an eagle's wing as it sweeps down upon you through the ravines; above and around you are snowy peaks and summits, and precipitous slopes of rock, upon whose edge sits the avalanche waiting for his prey.

Through such scenes, heavily laden, the zemindars take their way. Powerful and hardy are the sons of Cashmere; patiently they toil onwards through the drifting snow, in the name of Allah and his Prophet! Many encourage each other with the words of hope: it may be that they will yet reach the other side in safety. Alas, no! From two or three the strength is already departing, and the keen wind is paralysing the sinews.

Slowly the conviction fastens upon them that they shall never quit those frightful solitudes, never see again their homes, nor those who dwelt there waiting their return, far off in the sunny Vale of Cashmere.

Who dare realise such thoughts such moments?

Let us leave the scene of death. But oh, British reader! forget not that these and other frightful miseries are produced by a Government whose chief is a feudatory of the British crown; by a Government which de-

rives its permanence from the protection of the British rule; by a Government which the British power forced upon the people of Cashmere; by a Government into whose hands British statesmen sold the people of Cashmere; by a Government, therefore, whose existence is a disgrace to the British name. It is at once a memorial of that foul act, when, like the arch traitor of old, we bartered innocent lives, which fate placed in our hands, for a few pieces of silver.

And it is a standing witness that we accept that act of the past, now that its consequences have been seen, and take the burden of its responsibility upon ourselves."[1]

What other Kashmiri could have so eloquently championed their Cause? Thorpe appears to have been wholly involved. Kashmir will ever gratefully remember its first martyr.

Incidentally, is the former British Liberal leader Jeremy Thorpe a descendant of Mst. Jani? He didn't reply to my query nor was the ex-British Ambassador Mr. Pumphery able to render assistance. However, Mr. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto told this writer (30 April 1976) that he had found him very sympathetic to the cause of Kashmiris.

EPIDEMICS AND FAMINE

A grave epidemic broke out in the Valley in 1867 resulting in the death of thousands of people. Ranbir Singh, a true son of his father, made money even out of this misery. Says an English doctor then serving in the Srinagar Mission Hospital :

"The neglect, cruelty and rapacity which I witnessed during that epidemic, are inconceivable. As a specimen I may mention this fact: When the cholera was at its worst, it was announced in the city that His Highness, the Maharaja had discovered an effectual cure for the disease. This cure consisted of a printed 'mantar' or charm which was to be repeated and pasted above the door of the houses. The charm, it was announced, was not only curative but was preventive also. Each copy cost four annas (six pence) and was to be had at the Maharaja's post office. I went and bought several copies. I have them in my possession now ....I could mention more things of a piece with this but space forbids."[2]

"One day a poor sepoy who had been ordered to go to Gilgit and was

1 *Ibid.*, p. 47—49.
2 Seedtime in Kashmir, p. 207 & 212.

suffering from large abdominal aneurism, came to her for treatment. The Doctor after prescribing medicines, gave him a certificate that he was utterly unfit for such a journey. A few days later he came again to inform the Doctor that his Dogra Colonel, on being shown the certificate, had fined him a year's pay in advance and ordered him to leave for Gilgit the very next day. The poor wretch must have died in the way and left to be devoured by vultures."[1]

This shameless effort to make money by deceipt even out of an epidemic that had seized his subjects, is also borne out by the account given by Major General Ralph Young who was in Srinagar in July, 1867. He says :

"The Maharaja has had printed invocations to Sri Krishna for protection against cholera and sells them at - 4 - (annas) each."[2]

The next important event of his reign is the great famine of 1877 when nearly three-fifths of the population died in the Valley but before one comes to the famine itself, it would be appropriate to have a look at the state of economy as it then existed. In this connection one can't do better than quote an impartial observer like Sir Francis Young Husband, British Resident in 1900, who says :

"In the early sixties cultivation was decreasing; the people were wretchedly poor, and in any other country their state would have been almost one of starvation and famine; justice was such that those who could pay could at any time get out of jail, while the poor lived and died there almost without hope. There were few men of respectable, and none of wealthy appearance; and there were almost prohibitive duties levied on all merchandise imported or exported."[3]

"*About half a lakh of rupees was spent upon education, and another half lakh on repairing the 'Paths'. A slight attempt was also made to assess the amount of land revenue at a fixed amount.* This much was to the good, but the country was still very far indeed from what it ought to have been. The means of communication were rough and rude in the extreme, so that men instead of animal, had to be used as beasts of burden. *Even the new assessment of the land revenue was three times as heavy as that of the amount demanded in British districts in the Punjab. And there was still much waste land which the people were unwilling to put under cultivation, because under the existing system of land revenue administration they could not be sure that they would ever receive the results of their labour.*

1 Seedtime in Kashmir, p. 207 & 212.
2 Unpublished papers: India Office Library.
3 Young Husband, p. 176.

A cultivator would only produce as much as would, after payment of his revenue, provide for the actual wants of himself and his family, because he knew by experience that any surplus would be absorbed by rapacious underling officials. In matters of trades there were, too, still, the impediments of former days. *Upon every branch of commerce there was a multiplicity and weight of exaction. No product was too insignificant and no person too poor to contribute to the State. The manufacture or production of silk, saffron, tobacco, paper, wine and salt were all State monopoly*, and though the State sold grain at an extraordinarily cheap rate, the officials in charge did not always sell it to the people who most required it, or in the quantity they required. Favourite and influential persons would get as much as they wanted, but often, to the public the stores would be closed for weeks together and at other times the grain was sold to each family at a rate which was supposed to be proportionate to the number of persons in the family but the judges of the said quantity were not the persons most concerned, viz, the purchasers, but the local authorities. Private grain trade could not be openly conducted, and when the stocks in the country fell short of requirements, they could not be replenished by private enterprise.

On the manufacture of shawls parallel restrictions were placed. *The wool was taxed as it entered Cashmir, the manufacturer was taxed for every workman he employed, and at various stages of the process according to the value of the fabric; and, lastly, the merchant was taxed, before he could export the goods, the enormous duty of 85 per cent ad valorem. Butchers, bakers, carpenters, boatmen, and even prostitutes were still taxed, and coolies who were engaged to carry loads for travellers had to give up half their earnings.*

The whole country, in fact, was still in the grip of a grinding officialdom; and the officials were the remnants of a bygone, ignorant, and destructive age, when dynasties and institutions and life itself were in daily danger, when nothing was fixed and lasting, when all was liable to change and at the risk of chance, and each man had to make what he could while he could; and when, in consequence, a man of honesty and public spirit had no more chance of surviving than a baby would have in a battle."[1]

Mr. E. F. Knight, special correspondent of the London Times, in his book "Where Three Empires Meet" commenting on the economic condition of the people, has said:

"*In the first place it must be understood that all the soil is the property of the Maharajah.* The assami, or hereditary farmers, cultivate the land

1 Kashmir, p. 177-179.

on a very wasteful sort of metayer system, under which they have to pay, as revenue to the Maharajah, two-thirds of their crops, he supplying seed-corn and cattle when necessary. What this revenue amounts to is unknown, for no budget is issued, and the emptiness of the treasury is often pleaded as an excuse for the neglect to pay the troops and carry out treaty obligations. In the autumn of 1891 an English official was sent by the Indian Government to inquire into the finances of the country. His report, I believe, was confidential."[1]

"But whatever the value of the revenue, there can be little doubt that it is not what it should be. Of the total produce of the country, a far smaller fraction than the supposed two-thirds reaches the coffers of the State, and a very meagre proportion remains with the cultivator, while the bulk is swallowed up by the grasping official middlemen who stand between State and cultivator. Moreover, under the present system of robbery and oppression much less is produced than would be the case under a better order of things. It is no advantage to the assami to get the most he can out of the fertile soil, for any surplus over what is sufficient to allow him a bare subsistence, is wrung from him by the tax-farmers, who at the same time, that they plunder the peasant, embezzle the revenue due to the State.

The State is divided for purposes of revenue into districts called tehsils, each containing a number of villages, and being under an official known as a tahsildar. The tahsildar is an Oriental edition of a French Prefect, but is more powerful and far more irresponsible. He has the civil and criminal jurisdiction over his district, and enjoys unequalled opportunities for enriching himself at the expense of State and people.[2]

And it is, indeed, quite time that something should be done before the State is hopelessly ruined. Any traveller visiting Kashmir can see for himself how the officials of the Maharajah in all parts of the country kill for him the goose that lays the golden eggs. The people do not seek to make money, for if the officials heard of it, it would at once be wrung from them. For instance, the contractors on the Murree road offered high pay for the use of the farmers' bullock-carts in the winter season, when these were not required for agricultural work; but the farmers, knowing that the profit would not be theirs, refused to supply them. A shikaree will often beg a Sahib who has employed him to write a paper for him, stating that his pay has been but one-half of that really given, so that he may de-

1 & 2 Knight, p. 62 & 64.

ceive his rapacious tyrants and retain some portion of his earnings. For the same reasons Pathans and other foreigners are employed as navvies on the road, it not being possible to procure a sufficiency of free labour among the native population. Numbers of the peasantry have deserted their lands and fled to other countries—to the free Punjab, or even to half-savage Yagistan—leaving their share of the village revenue to be paid by their neighbours. In remote districts things are still worse, and entire villages have been abandoned because life under the local tyrant had become a burden too heavy to be borne."[1]

Another witness of the land system, Mr. Charles Girdlestone, British representative in Srinagar in 1871, has said :

"The Sikhs began by claiming, in addition to the State's normal half, one truk (six seers) of the cultivator's, whence the cess levied under the name of trukee ever since whilst also from that time oppression in general has been characterised by the term Raiyeetee. Trukee, however, was not long allowed to stand at its first proportion but was advanced by degrees till it reached three-eights of the tenant's share and in addition various other cesses such as Russud, Tumbol, Neeingnee, Mundiree and Russomi Daftar which included Wuzeer's, Kanoongo's, Kardar's and Patwaree's fees grew up, till the cultivator has found himself at the worst with no more than a quarter of the original half share that is one-eighth of the crop and at the best, he seldom secures for himself more than a quarter of the crop. In addition those who keep cattle have to pay the tax on them and to contribute a "little" of the dairy produce to the State."[2]

While the land was thus being abandoned by its age-old tillers, the Government was creating hundreds of jagirs; some were conferred on its agents while most of them were attached to all sorts of temples and Pathshalas. Mr. Knight, while in Srinagar, had the opportunity of accompanying the Settlement Commissioner, on some of his tours, to see for himself the Settlement proceedings. On one such visit, a poor peasant, 'carrying a small bundle which emitted dreadful odour' burst into cries and told Lawrence :

"O, Sahib, I have come back from the Punjab to my native village but they will not give me back my land. Lo, here in this bundle is my dead child and I have not even so much as a bit of ground in which to bury the body."[3]

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1 Knight, p. 66.
2 Memorandum on Kashmir, p. 34.
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CHAPTER VII

Begaar, Taxation and Migration

The Horrible Transport Begaar

Another curse introduced by Sikhs but taken to its extreme by the Dogras, was the system of forced labour known as "begaar" which has been defined by foreign visitors as "forced labour" but it was something worse than that; it was free forced labour. All non-Muslims stood exempted on account of being co-religionists of the ruling family. The system assumed extremely dreadful proportions in Kashmir valley under the early Dogras mainly because of the frontier wars for conquest and the consequent necessity of providing the troops on the move as well as the huge military establishments in the conquered territories with adequate supplies. The troops couldn't lift the supply-load themselves, as apart from the necessity of keeping them in good humour, it may have also been considered necessary to conserve their energy for possible encounters on the way. Again, Gulab Singh might have thought, that, when beasts of burden with almost unbelievable endurance, were available in the shape of his Muslim subjects from the Valley, why not to spare his clanish soldiers, of this burden and annoyance? Besides, in any regime, the civilians may die of hunger but the army, continues to be adequately fed; so a permanent supply line had to be established between Srinagar and the Northern areas to maintain the flow of supplies. It has been already seen that the tracks or roads that lead to Gilgit, Leh, and Askardu have to pass through lofty mountains, some as high as seventeen thousand feet. Thousands of Kashmiris were, therefore, collected from time to time by sheer brute force and compelled, at the point of bayonets, to carry military supplies. It was only a miracle if some-one survived the most demanding journeys, the frost bites, the severity of winter, the meagre and, sometimes, an unfamiliar diet. If some porter slipped down

the precipice or fell ill or had his feet frost-bitten, he was heartlessly abandoned to die by inches, totally unattended in his anguish and a prey to vultures and beasts while the caravan moved on, shamelessly unmindful of his tragic impending doom. There is hardly a family in the Valley, particularly outside Srinagar city, in which the tragic disappearance of some male relation employed on 'begaar' has not descended as a tragic part of the family chronicle from generation to generation. Fortunately for posterity, some contemporary visitors to Kashmir have left some account of this dreadful institution. Doctor Arthur Neve gives the following account:

> "An old Sikh warrior vividly described to me his share in the war. It was in the Rupal nullah (Northern region) that I met him, and he pointed out the way that he, with some three or four thousand men, had gone—across the glaciers of Nanga Parbat and over the Mazenue pass—and told of the hundreds of porters who perished from hunger and cold, and how, the few Chilasis guarding the upper valleys having fled, the troops ravaged and destroyed the villages in the Bunar ravine. For many years after I came to the country, the mere name of Gilgit struck terror into the Kashmiri. For him it had the most alarming meaning; it spoke of forced labour, frost-bite on the lofty passes, and valleys of death, where the camps were haunted by cholera and starvation. Early in April one year came word that the frontier tribes were on the war-path, and orders were issued for a levy of 5,000 porters to accompany the two regiments sent to reinforce the garrisons.[1]
>
> I was at Islamabad, endeavouring to fight an epidemic of cholera by sanitation, and noticed coolies collecting from all the surrounding region, each with his blanket, spare grass-shoes, his carrying crutch back. And I was present at the great concourse on a green meadow in front of the mosque when a sort of farewell service was held for those starting on this perilous journey. Loud was the sobbing of many and fervid the demeanour of all as, led by moullah, they intoned their prayers and chanted some of their special Ramazan penitential psalms. Even braver men than the Kashmiris might well have been agitated at such a time, when taking farewell of their loved ones! Who will till their fields? What would happen during their long absence to their wives and children? To what perils would they themselves be exposed in the crowded bivouacs and snowy passes of that deadly Gilgit district."[2]

On 1st July, 1862, when Capt. Knight entered Srinagar, he found 400 Kashmiris "with heavy packs besides them, waiting for an escort to

1 Dr. Neve, p. 139.
2 Dr. Neve, p. 140.

take out supplies to the Maharaja's army, now on active service at the place called Gilgit, in the mountains". The Captain continues:

> "Reports say that His Highness having a number of troops wanting arrears of pay, sends them out periodically to contend the hill tribes, by way of settlement in full of all demands."[1]

Mr. E. F. Knight who had the opportunity of witnessing their collection, and accompanied one batch to Gilgit and beyond where he went to cover, for the London Times, military operations against Hunza, Chitral, etc., has recorded:

> "But a native of this State suffers from a form of oppression far more severe than the extortion of the tax-collectors; the latter at least leaves him a bare subsistence, but that of which I am now speaking signifies separation from family, and in too many cases torture and death. I have already alluded to the begar, or forced labour.[2]
>
> But there is a just begar and a begar that becomes the most harmful instrument that can be placed in the hands of an unscrupulous official. Many thousands of villagers have been driven off every year to toil as carriers of burdens on the Gilgit road. *Gilgit is a name of terror throughout the State. An enormous transport service is needed, as I shall show further on, to supply the garrisons on the northern frontier with grain; and the Kashmir authorities have been utterly careless of the comfort, and even of the lives, of the unfortunate wretches who are dragged from their homes and families to trudge for months over the wearisome marches of that arid country. They fall on the road to perish of hunger and thirst, and, thinly clad as they are, are destroyed in hundreds at a time by the cold on the snowy passes. When a man is seized for this form of begaar, his wives and children hang upon him, weeping, taking it almost for granted that they will never see him again. A gang of these poor creatures, heavily laden with grain, toiling along the desert crags between Astore and Gilgit, on a burning summer's day, urged on by a sepoy guard, is perhaps as pitiable a spectacle as any to be seen on the roads of Siberia. But these are not convicts and criminals; they are Mussulman farmers, harmless subjects of the Maharajah.*[3]
>
> Such being the horrors of the transport begar and the Gilgit road, though the worst, is not the only one in the State on which the system is conducted with cruelty—men are naturally willing to pay a good

1 Capt. Knight, p. 76.
2 E.F. Knight, p. 67.
3 E.F. Knight, p. 68 & 69.

deal to be exempt from it, and this, of course, gives our typical official an opportunity he is not likely to miss. Most of the begar has to be carried on in the summer months, when the passes are open, at the very season that the villagers are needed in their fields, the crops suffering from their absence. It is then that the grasping official swoops down on a district, and while raising the complement of men required by the State, levies black-mail from all the others. *It has been calculated that for one man who is taken on this forced labour, ten purchase their immunity from the officials, as much as one hundred rupees being paid in some instances.* The village is thus impoverished and rendered incapable of paying its share of revenue to the State.

The begaar and its accompanying blackmail assumes many forms. *Thus recently, when a dozen carpenters were required for Government work in a distant region, every carpenter in Srinagar was imprisoned by the Police, and had to pay for his liberty.* Sometimes all the men of a trade—the bricklayers, for instance—getting wind that it is intended to make one of these raids upon them, fly from the capital to the mountains for a time, public and private building work coming to a standstill until they return.[1]

All Hindoos were exempt from forced labour, the burden falling on Mohammedan villagers only. Some of these also escape it, for it occasionally happens that a whole village is sold by its cultivators for a nominal sum to some influential Hindoo, on condition that he obtains for them exemption from begaar, while they remain on the land as his tenants. So many other, more or less, fraudulent methods for attaining the same end are practised that the incidence of the begaar falls very oppressively on certain poor and unprotected villages which cannot afford to purchase immunity."[2]

According to the same author, three hundred labourers and their mules perished in a single storm on the Rajdiangan pass between Bandipura and Guraiz, in the autumn of 1890.

According to Fauq, when Diwan Hari Chand was sent to reconquer Ladakh after the death of Zorawar Singh, ten thousand Muslims from Kashmir valley were forcibly collected and compelled to move with the army as porters. Not many survived the rigours of the journey. Next year, in 1842, Gulab Singh came to Srinagar and personally supervised the

1 E.F. Knight, p. 68 & 69.
2 E.F. Knight, p. 70.

despatch of troops and supplies from Nasim Bagh; another six thousand Kashmiri Muslims were forcibly despatched as porters.

Sir Walter Lawrence who is still remembered with gratitude by Kashmiris for his Settlement work as well as for bringing about substantial reduction in the begaar system, testifies from personal experience:

> "I have often been present when a requisition for carriage arrives in a village, and the following account of the system is a simple statement of what used to be an every day occurrence. Some one in Srinagar wants ten coolies or porters to carry his baggage for a stage, or for one or more stages. The official to whom the requisition is made passes on the order to the District officer, and in order to make sure that there will be no deficiency in the number of the coolies writes that twenty men are wanted. The district officer writes to the tehsildar and, acting on the same prudent calculation, orders forty coolies. The tehsildar then seizes eighty coolies from the villages. Nearly all these eighty men are engaged, perhaps, in weeding or watering their rice, and as they do not know how long they may be kept waiting in Srinagar, and as they dread that in their absence their fields will run dry or will be choked with weeds, they are not allured by the idea of a wage of four annas a day which they may or may not receive. Bargaining begins, and if the official incharge of the business is a smart man, he will take seventy four-annas from the seventy villagers whom he exempts, and will send in ten men to Srinagar. If he is a very smart man he will take eighty four-annas from the eighty villagers, and will still send in ten men to Srinagar.
>
> The instance I have given above refers to the modest demand for carriage made by a European visitor, and in such instances the wage of four annas per stage was invariably paid, *but when the requisition for coolies was on account of State work, no wage would be paid.*
>
> Gilgit to the Kashmiri is a constant terror, and when it was rumoured that transport was wanted to convey the baggage of the troops going to or coming from Gilgit, there was a general stampede among the villagers. *I have seen whole villages bivouacking on the mountains when the agents for the collection of a transport arrived in their tahsil, and I have seen inhuman punishment dealt out to men who demurred to leaving their homes for two or three months with the prospect of death from cold or starvation. I have seen villagers maimed from frost-bite or shrivelled and paralyzed from exposure to cold, and it is no marvel that the Kashmiris should loathe the very name of Gilgit.* It may be added that if men would pay four annas in order to avoid carrying a load for one

easy stage, they would very gladly pay much larger sums to escape a journey to Gilgit, *and I know that since I have been in Kashmir, villagers have paid from Rs. 70/- to Rs. 90/- per head in order to purchase their exemption.*

The other side of the begar is also a great trouble to the villagers, but it has been easier to abolish. It consists of requisitions for village produce, and is a form of purveyance on behalf of officials. *Under this system officials would obtain wood, grass, milk, poultry and grain, blankets and an occasional pony, cows and sheep free of cost, and higher officials would build houses in the city or cultivate waste land through the unpaid labour of the villagers.* When I commenced work in Kashmir I came across numerous instances of this kind of begar, and in one tahsil I found that three villages had been sold to a recent Hakim-i-Ala for very trivial amounts, giving an average of about Rs. 40/- per village. On making inquiries I found that the villagers were only too glad to part with their then shadowy rights in the land, as the purchaser had given them a written order exempting them from all kinds of begar, and the flourishing condition of the villages and the sleek appearance of the cultivators showed that they had made a good though illegal bargain. Many other villages were similarly sold, all for nominal sums, the real consideration being that the villagers were to be freed from begar. In one instance a tahsildar bought a fine village for Rs. 130/-, but he did not even go through the form of paying this sum, but excused the villagers Rs. 130/- from their revenue and entered it as an arrear."[1]

Father Tyndale Biscoe, who spent almost half a century in Srinagar, has given the following account of begaar as he saw it:

"These men were collected from the villages with the aid of press-gangs. The sepoys always brought in more than were required so that those who had money could buy themselves off their hands.

At Bandipura they were collected and loaded up. *The only ration allowed them was a seer of rice per day*: this they had to carry, plus the straw for making their straw shoes, plus their load of food for the garrison. *No provision was made for them as they crossed the snow passes, so that many died on the road, and often it happened that when they did reach Gilgit, they were sold as slaves to the wild inhabitants of that inhospitable region. The grand-father of one of my servants, who was sent there, was exchanged for a Chinese dog, but later on he escaped.*"[2]

1 Lawrence, p. 413.
2 Tyndale Biscoe, p. 236.

Lt. Robert Thorpe has cited an instance from personal knowledge when, in 1866 summer, a large number of traders, boatmen and peasants were forcibly sent to Gilgit with military supplies. All that the Dogra Government cared to provide them with, was a seer of rice a day as ration, with the result that most of them died on their way to or from Gilgit.[1]

Giving an instance of the ravages of begaar system, a liberal-minded Hindu, Shyam Lal Kapur, Editor Guru Ganthal, Lahore, wrote in the paper's issue of 3-1-1927:

> "As the Nawab of Malerkotla desired to visit all hill-stations in Kashmir, the Government had placed at his disposal a large number of labourers to carry his camp. *One morning while riding a horse he saw a group of wretched labourers sitting in the immediate neighbourhood, so he went there to have a few words with them. In course of the talk he was extremely sorry to learn that they were members of a baarat (marriage party) who had been seized while on their way back with the bride to attend on his camp. Even the bride-room was not spared. He too was seized at the same time and not even allowed to accompany his bride to her new home.*"

It was at the persistent pressure of the British Resident Mr. Plowden that the Dogra Government abolished begaar, though only partially, by a State Council Resolution dated 18-4-1891 and instead levied an additional cess on land revenue to meet the cost of a newly created Transport department with one thousand labourers and two hundred pack ponnies permanently employed. A labourer was now to be paid Rs. 5/- a month. Sir Walter Lawrence appears to have been the author of the scheme.

SELF-DESTRUCTIVE TAXATION

The state of economy in the villages and the highly deplorable condition of the peasantry may be judged from the fact that even a partisan like Mr. Bamzai had to concede, though the undercurrent betrays an effort to defend his Pandit community:

> "The machinery to work this defective and pernicious method of collecting land revenue could not but be corrupt and inefficient. Miserably low salaries were paid to the Patwari and Tehsildar and there was no reward for honest or efficient work. Even the meagre salaries were not paid in cash but in kind. No wonder that these officials took the fullest advantage of the opportunities for perquisites known as Rasum. A typical village had to pay in Rasum to the officials as

1 Thorpe, p. 45.

much as Rs. 270/- in addition to the revenue! When one considers that each tehsil had an average of 150 to 200 villages, it was not 'surprising' that the officials never grumbled at their low pay, and never complained if their pay was greatly in arrears."[1]

When Sir Lawrence took over the Settlement work from Mr. A. Wingate, what he found in the villages is briefly described below:

> "In 1889, the Kashmir State was bankrupt. The rich land was left uncultivated, and the army was employed in forcing the villagers to plough and sow, and worse still, the soldiers came at harvest time, and when the share of the State had been seized and these men of war had helped themselves, there was very little grain to tide the unfortunate peasants over the cruel winter, when the snow lies deep and temperature falls below zero."[2]

The taxation was unprecedentedly heavy. According to Lawrence:

> "Nearly everything save air and water was brought under taxation."

The water could not be taxed because Jhelum river passes through all important towns and, even otherwise, water is in such abundance that Pandit Brij Narain Chakbast, an old-stock Kashmiri settled in Lucknow, exclaimed with joy when, on his first visit to Kashmir, he found pure water everywhere:

"ذرہ ذرہ ہے میرے کشمیر کا مہماں نواز
راہ میں پتھر کے ٹکڑوں نے دیا پانی مجھے"

Trans: Each iota of my Vale is a charming host;

Even pebbles in my way, quenched my thirst.

Apart from land revenue, customs, heavy fines, profit from State monopoly of food grains, minerals, fruit gardens, manufacture of wines and scores of other cesses, according to Mr. L. Bowring,[3] Private Secretary to the Viceroy, Lord Canning, marriages, buffaloes, sheep and singharas were also taxed. According to him, shawl-makers had to pay five taxes; as shop-keepers; on the import of wool and pashmina from Ladakh; custom duty when taking out for sale; duty on finished goods; special duty on worked borders.

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1 Bamzai, p. 633.
2 Lawrence, p. 128 (The India We Served).
3 Eastern Experiences, p. 85.

According to Charles Girdlestone, the following were also taxed:

"Sugar-makers, fruiterers; makers of pickles and sweet-meats; bakers, corn-chandlers, porters, cotton carders, blacksmiths, goldsmiths, braziers, dyers, sellers of woollen-thread, prostitutes, cloth merchants, sellers of glass-bangles, menial workers, soap boilers, polishers of arms, gardeners, frings and tap makers, tanners and saddlers, cloth brokers, turners in wood, cloth dressers, knife makers, painters, basket makers, shoe makers, *grave-diggers*, boatmen, *earth cutters*, *wood-cutters*, money changers, cutters and polishers of precious stones, leather sellers, makers of woollen garments, bow makers, *cow-herds*, weavers, *friers of grain*, *leech sellers*, dealers in medicines, comb makers, *sellers of fire-wood*, moongeries (makers of rice bread), paper makers etc."

According to the same source, circumcision was also taxed; in 1871 it brought in Rs. 600 as revenue. The sale of chinar leaves brought into the coffers of the philistine, rupees twenty-five. In 1871, the tax on sheep and goats earned Rs. 1,07,311. The Muslims had also to pay a tax on their marriages. It is obvious that the marriage tax sought to prevent the growth of Muslim population and the tax on circumcision was a direct blow to their faith, particularly among the poorest classes.

According to Knight, "among the taxes, realised in kind, were a certain weight of chob-i-kot, the root of a mountain herb reputed for exciting sexual desire; and so many maunds of violet etc."

According to Lawrence,[1] a tax of thirteen rupees per hundred sheep and known as zar-i-chaupan was collected when the flocks moved towards mountain pastures. At the same time, the State also had the privilege of selecting one in each thousand sheep without payment. This was in addition to the selection of one, without payment, out of each hundred while the flock was in the plains. The first was known as Hazari or 'khilkat' and the second as Barra. The latter was afterwards substituted by presents of dhup roots for burning as incense in the Hindu temples. In addition, a tax of two annas per sheep was realised every six months. To facilitate the realisation of these taxes, the peasant was compelled to hand over his sheep to a government-appointed chaupan, or shepherd whom the peasant had to pay for his services. Many a sheep were never returned; the Government agents and the chaupan conspiring to share the loot, says Lawrence:

1 Lawrence, p. 363.

"As a rule the chaupan eats or sells a considerable number of sheep entrusted to his care. He is obliged to produce the head or skin of a missing sheep or he is called upon to take an oath that the sheep was destroyed by a panther or some other wild beast. Failing this the chaupan pays eight annas for the missing sheep."[1]

While the punishment of death for cow-slaughter was justified on the basis of the animal's religious sanctity, the Dogras, in their greed for money, imposed a tax of ten annas per cow of over three years. Every milk-giving buffalo and known as shakh-shumari was also taxed; so was a barren buffalo, known as phandari.

Following is the estimate of revenue receipts for 1871-72 compiled by Sir Lawrence:

			Rs.
1.	Value of Government share of rice crop	..	29,44,844
2.	Revenue in cash	..	14,96,741
3.	Receipts from the shawl department	..	6,00,000
4.	Tribute from petty chiefs	..	37,163
5.	Town duties and customs	..	5,76,000
6.	Timber	..	1,14,210
7.	Sheep and goats	..	1,07,311
8.	Opium	..	1,56,000
9.	Offerings of pious Hindus	..	98,647
10.	Cows and buffaloes	..	18,265
11.	Ferries	..	15,599
12.	Tobacco	..	40,840
13.	Courts of Justice	..	18,692
14.	Charas	..	21,000
15.	Saffron	..	34,656
16.	Silk	..	50,000
17.	Circumcision	..	600
18.	Receipts from Dal	..	20,792
19.	Singharas	..	35,615
20.	Hiring of Government ponnies	..	51,871
21.	Fines	..	17,250

1 Lawrence, p. 362.

			Rs.
22.	Mint	..	12,600
23.	Stamps	..	9,600
24.	Fines	..	17,230
25.	Post office	..	5,312
26.	Sale of wild fruit	..	1,350
27.	Sale of Government horses	..	67,500
28.	Sale of chinar leaves	..	25
29.	Fruit of Government gardens	..	3,708
30.	Taxes on shops and artificers etc.	..	1,13,916
	Total	..	66,86,644

Given below is a detail of revenue receipts from taxes on shops, artificers and other occupations, for the same financial year:[1]

		Rs.
1.	Sugar makers	8,110
2.	Fruiterers, sweet-meat sellers	8,891
3.	Bakers	8,385
4.	Corn chandlers	4,800
5.	Porters—coolies	775
6.	Masons	1,500
7.	Carpenters	2,995
8.	Betelnut sellers	365
9.	Butchers	21,750
10.	Cotton-carders	380
11.	Blacksmiths	7,795
12.	Goldsmiths	992
13.	Braziers	150
14.	Dyers	3,450
15.	Sellers of woollen thread	2,829
16.	Prostitutes	1,900
17.	Cloth merchants	1,250
18.	Sellers of glass bangles	575

1 Lawrence, p. 236.

				Rs.
19.	Menial workers (all Muslims)	..	..	11,965
20.	Soap boilers	..	..	1,442
21.	Polishers of arms	..	..	160
22.	Gardeners	..	..	3,110
23.	Fringe and tap makers	..	..	706
24.	Farmers and saddlers	..	..	1,850
25.	Cloth brokers	..	..	1,430
26.	Turners in wood	..	..	215
27.	Cloth dressers	..	..	120
28.	Knife makers	..	..	85
29.	Painters	..	..	275
30.	Basket makers	..	..	180
31.	Shoe makers	..	..	550
32.	Grave-diggers	..	..	810
33.	Boatmen carrying stones	..	..	700
34.	Earth cutters	..	..	40
35.	Wood cutters	..	..	630
36.	Money changers	..	..	716
37.	Cutters and polishers of precious stones		..	192
38.	Leather sellers	..	..	160
39.	Makers of woollen garments	..	..	165
40.	Bow makers	..	..	475
41.	Cowherds	..	..	12,670
42.	Weavers	..	..	2,160
43.	Friers of grain	..	..	111
44.	Leech sellers and dealers in Medicines		..	913
45.	Comb makers	..	..	30
46.	Sellers of firewood	..	..	400
47.	Makers of rice bread	..	..	623
48.	Paper makers	..	..	775
49.	Miscellaneous	..	..	366
	Total	..	..	1,13,916

The taxes and the income under each head given above, except town duties, customs, opium and mint, relate to the Valley alone. It will thus be seen that the main burden of taxation fell on the Muslims of the Valley. The curse of begaar for Gilgit and Ladakh also fell exclusively on their shoulders.

The income from excise, court-fees, courts, jails, post, telegraphs and other miscellaneous sources such as gardens, timber depots, rakhs and chobi-kot not covered so far, was Rs. 5,53,114 in 1888-89; it rose to Rs. 9,15,265 in 1893-94. Yet another tax imposed on peasants and herdsmen was known as 'kah-charai' or grazing tax. In Kashmir valley it had been fixed and was realised alongwith the land revenue. In Jammu, in the seven tehsils of Mirpur, Bhimber, Jammu, Samba, Akhnur, Kathua and Jasmergarh, it was realised although there were no pastures. An additional tax was charged when cattle moved to mountains in the summer. Income from this tax in Jammu towards the close of 1930 was Rs. 46,188. In Mirpur tehsil it brought in Rs. 7,763/-. Before the settlement of 1928-30, it was only Rs. 3,801/- which meant an increase of 104%.

Before the settlement of 1929-30 Bikrami, no separate malikana—landlords' dues—was charged in Mirpur tehsil where the State was entered in revenue papers as proprietor of all lands although those entered as tenants had been in possession since generations and had, in many cases, cleared forests, broken its lands and brought them under cultivation. In this Settlement a separate exaction, as malikana, to the tune of Rs. 26,252/- was imposed on them. The land revenue was also increased from Rs. 2,53,897/- to Rs. 2,64,305/-. The total amount recovered as malikana in Jammu came to Rs. 46,735/-. This additional burden on the already impoverished peasantry in Mirpur created strong resentment against the Government which was personified by Hindus.

The boatmen in Srinagar had to pay various taxes, such as the boat-tax, the ghat-tax (parking tax) and the camping sites tax. Boat tax was calculated according to the length of the boat. They had to pay the taxes even if, as very often happened, their boats remained unhired for the whole year. Even boats used for their own dwelling were also taxed. The marriage tax continued during the reign of Pratap Singh though instead of the bride-groom's having to pay Rs. 3/- as before, in the case of first marriage, every house was now required to pay annas 8 annually irrespective of a marriage taking or not taking place. It is thus a unique instance in the history of taxation when a tax was realised just for nothing, apart from the fact that even a bride's family had to pay

for her marriage. Budget figures are not available but there is little doubt that in the new form, the Government income must have been higher than before. The tax was disgustingly known as 'Suthra-shahi'. Anyone from British India marrying in the State had to pay a special tax of rupees fifty. These latter marriages, largely, took place for prostitution purposes. A tax at the rate of rupees fifty per thousand baked bricks and rupees two per thousand on unbaked bricks was also levied. During the later years of Pratap Singh's rule, the tax on baked bricks was reduced to rupees eight per thousand. This explains also why the pucca houses were so scarce. Cesses realised alongwith land revenue included those meant for Dharamarth, hospitals, administration of Justice, gadadhari, nazrana kisht and Rasum-e-Sarkardagi. The tax on soap manufacture was very heavy.[1]

The poor wretched peasant had not only the land revenue and the other taxes, already enumerated above, to pay but also many other exactions. The list is too long and repulsive. The average 'legitimate' revenue per village was made up of the following items :[2]

		Rs.	An.
1.	Half share of khareef and rabi crops	520	0
2.	Tax on walnut trees	63	12
3.	Lumpsum paid to land cultivated by shawl-weavers and for land under vegetables	138	12
4.	An advance on the original assessment made by a Pandit who having failed to pay, the poor villagers were forced by the State to pay the advance ..	300	0
5.	Tax on account of using jungle produce ..	7	0
6.	Tax on grass and for payment of village officers ..	9	0

In 1833, the State levied, in addition, the following taxes :

		Rs.	An.
7.	Tax of 2 percent (Do kharwari)	18	13
8.	Sale—A tax to meet the expenditure of Sanskrit schools	18 (8 and 9 together)	13
9.	Jalus—A tax to meet the expenses incurred by the Government for entertaining British visitors.		
10.	Kanoongo tax	3	14
11.	Patwari tax	3	14

1 Hassan, p. 634 to 654.
2 Lawrence, p. 415-416.

		Rs.	An.
12.	Tax to meet the cost of temples being built by the Maharaja	2	8
13.	Tax on account of Establishment (administration of the State)	77	3
14.	Khidmatgars (of Maharaja and family) ..	1	4
15.	Tax on account of land granted to the chakdar (normally a Pandit). He neglected to cultivate it and the villagers were compelled by the Government to pay the amount assessed against it	58	9
16.	Tax on account of apricot trees (even where there were no such trees)	10	0
17.	Tax for the support of temples	}	
18.	Nazrana to the Raja	}	
19.	Tax on the occasion of marriages in the royal dynasty	} 90	0
20.	Tax to make up the loss 'suffered' by the State on horse-trading	}	
21.	Tax for dispensaries which existed only in the two principal cities	}	

The average annual perquisites (Rasum) from each village, in addition to the taxes heretofore detailed, were as follows:

22.	Tehsildar	12	0
23.	Tehsildar's Assistant	8	0
24.	Naib Tehsildar	8	0
25.	Naib Tehsildar's Assistant	5	0
26.	Parcha Navis	5	0
27.	Mir Chaudhry	13	0
28.	Assistant to Mir Chaudhry	11	0
29.	Mir Zilladar	5	0
30.	Zilladar	10	0
31.	Rassad Talbana	25	0

Given below is the list of taxes realised from each village in kind (Price):

32.	Blankets	4	0
33.	Ponies	22	0
34.	Ghee	12	0
35.	Sheep	6	0
36.	Violets, Zira and Guchhis	4	0
37.	Chob-i-kot	21	0

		Rs.	An.
38.	Wool	12	0
39.	Grass	8	0
40.	Share of crop taken by Zilladar	9	0
41.	Share of crop taken by Mir Chaudhry ..	7	0
42.	Share of crop taken by patwari and Headman ..	7	0
43.	Items taken by police	6	0
44.	Expenses towards tehsil establishment ..	7	0
45.	Wasil Baqi Nawis	10	0
46.	Siyah Navis	3	0
47.	Tehsil Treasurer	2	0
48.	Tehsil Qanoongo	4	0
49.	20 fowls for officials	5	0
50.	Tehsildar's fine (not credited to the State) ..	10	0
51.	Miscellaneous	4	0
	Total per village	265	0
	Grand total per village	1,597	0

These taxes relate to Kashmir valley alone. It had 15 tehsils and each tehsil comprised an average of 175 to 200 villages. Each tehsil had thus to pay Rs. 2,99,300 and the whole Valley, a staggering sum of Rs. 44,89,500 as legalised taxes alone.[1] And this in an era when rice was sold 2½ maunds a rupee, ghee 4 seers a rupee, horses Rs. 15/- a head; wool 2 seers a rupee and walnuts 2½ maunds for rupees three. The rupee was of 'chilki' coinage which itself was equivalent to annas ten of the British rupee.[2]

Even the wretched scavenger could not be spared. He had to give, annually, a specified number of skins to the Government whether or not any cattle died in the village. Certain articles required by the Government for local consumption or export were nominally purchased. Let us take the instances of chob-i-kot, the aromatic root of Saussurea which was exported to China and birch bark (bhoj pattar) which was needed for roofing of Government or semi-Government houses. According to Lawrence, to quote an average example, in 1889, the villagers of Phak supplied, on demand, 48 kharwars of chob-i-kot for which they received a credit of Rs. 4/- per Kharwar. Actually they did not extract the root themselves as it is found on very high altitudes far away from their homes; they purchased it from shepherds or mountain-dwellers at the rate

1&2 Lawrence, p. 415

of Rs. 6/- per kharwar; besides undergoing a loss of Rs. 96/-, they had to carry the huge quantity a long distance to the State depots. In 1890, 141 kharwars of this root was demanded from the same village at the sweet will of the Government. They were also required to provide 18 to 29 kharwars of birch bark at the rate of Rs. 2/- per kharwar. The villagers themselves bought it at the rate of Rs. 3-2-0 per kharwar and, besides, had to carry it to Srinagar as unpaid beasts of burden. In 1891 the demand was raised to 200 kharwars. The same year, the villagers of Shadipur were required to provide a large quantity of this commodity at Gulmarg. They had to walk a distance of many marches to Sind valley and after procuring it, return back to their village and then go to Gulmarg with the load—again at a distance of many marches.

Hindus are, as a whole, vegetarians and abstain from meat. So the Muslim subjects of the Dogras had very often, to go without meat. For a long time, slaughter of any animal and sale of any meat on sixty days in a year, had been prohibited and violation made punishable. Exemption was made only in the case of Europeans, for obvious reasons.

Dogras' concept of public administration can be judged from the fact that in the year 1871, out of an income, from Kashmir valley, of Rs. 66,86,644, while a sum of Rs. 2,86,128/- was spent on the entertainment of European visitors, a sum of Rs. 46,244 only could be spared for roads and public buildings.

The land revenue in 1871 was Rs. 27,75,990. This did not include the large jagirs held by Rajas Amar Singh and Ram Singh carrying a supposed land revenue of Rs. 74,607 whereas actually it was much more. It also does not include the land revenue of 57 villages totalling rupees 59,490 per annum which was conferred upon Mian Rajputs from Jammu in the tehsils of Shopian and Deosar. In 1891, land assessed to Rs. 6,305 as revenue was granted for maintenance of Hindu religious shrines.

The peasent was required to pay land revenue in kind. It was opposed by the people who generally clamoured for making cash payment. Immediately after taking control of Kashmir valley in November, 1846, Gulab Singh abolished private sale of food grains and made it a State monopoly. This also hit hard not only the peasantry who on account of the elimination of competition, had per force to sell it to the only customer—the State—at the latter's price, but also a large number of people who earned their living as food-grain dealers. However, in 1847, when Lt. Taylor was sent to Srinagar, Gulab Singh agreed to abolish State monopoly and even permit the export of food grains to the Punjab.

He also agreed that the peasants would be allowed to pay their land revenue in cash. It was, however, laid down that no person shall sell rice at a price higher than rupee one per kharwar. Within a few years, through the manipulation of Pandits, aided by the corrupt Dogra aristocracy, the land revenue was again realised in kind. The reasons have been elaborated by Sir Lawrence :

> "There are two reasons which have compelled the official and influential classes in Kashmir to fiercely oppose a cash settlement. The first reason is that the collection of revenue in kind gives employment to a large number of wity Pandits and also gives them great opportunities for perquisites and peculation. It may be stated that the real or market price of unhusked rice is in ordinary years about double the price at which the State sells the grain (to city-dwellers) and it is natural that everyone should wish to handle a commodity in which there is so large a margin of profit. The men who obtain employment in the collection of grains, make their first gains in the village where they take sometimes as much as 1/5th in excess of the legal State demand. They make a further gain when they adulterate the grain on its way to Srinagar. Each assami (peasant) is ready to pay considerable sums if bad samples of grain are received as revenue and the good grain is left but the simplest way of making money in revenue collections is to boldly sell the grain for Rs. 4/- and to credit the State with Rs. 2/-, the State rate (by 1891); when the grain reached the city, the officials in charge of the grain boats would make over to their friends and relatives a boat-load of good grain. Bad or suspicious grain would be sold to the city people at State rates."

Even after introducing cash payment sometime later, a part of land revenue continued to be realised in kind in the shape of 'shali'. The system was known as Mujawaza, the assessment. In 1891 it came to 3,60,000 kharwars or nine lac maunds. In 1893 Lawrence reduced it to three lac kharwars. It was later reduced to 1,75,000 kharwars. The abuses inherent in the system, were reduced but could not be altogether wiped out. It is interesting to point out that according to Lawrence, there was storage capacity for one lac kharwars only which unmistakably shows that the rest never reached the State godowns but went to the feeding of the corrupt administration.

THE STRIKING WEAVERS' TRAGEDY

It has been estimated that twenty-seven thousand weavers were employed in the shawl industry in the working of eleven thousand looms.

Pandit Raj Kak Dhar, the erstwhile son of Pandit Birbal Dhar, had acquired the shawl department on a contract of rupees twelve lacs, that left him completely free to realise it through rates arbitrarily fixed and recover the same in any manner and by any method of his own choosing ; of course, the brute force of the Dogra army was always at his disposal. Every weaver was required to pay him annually a sum of rupees forty-nine. At the same time no weaver could change his employer. According to Mr. Bamzai :

> "The result was that after working from morning to night a shawl-weaver could get no more than four annas in wages per day. A weaver could thus earn seven or eight rupees per month out of which he paid five rupees in tax which left him three rupees to live on. The lazy and sickly weavers could not pay the tax and thus became a debtor of the Government."[1]

Pandit Raj Kak Dhar had set up his office in a building at Saraf Kadal, Srinagar. In league with Wazir Punnu, a notoriously corrupt Dogra officer, he frequently resorted to the use of army for realisation of arbitrary impositions. A deputation of the weavers therefore met the Wazir at Kazigund and apprised him of their difficulties. There was no response. Another deputation thereupon went to the residence of Diwan Kripa Ram to apprise him of their problems but, on the advice of Dhar and Punnu, he refused to grant an interview. This enraged the whole community ; so, on 29th April, 1865, the weavers took out a procession which attracted, out of sympathy, a large number of fellow Muslims. They marched to the Zal Dagar Maidan. Meanwhile Dhar manipulated the Diwan to believe that the processionists intended to kill him. Unnerved, he hastily rushed a large force under the command of Col. Bije Singh who pushed the unarmed hungry multitude towards the narrow Haji Pather bridge. In the stampede, twenty eight persons were drowned in the stream and many others injured. On the next day the victims were paraded in a procession with the declared intention of placing them before Ranbir Singh to seek his justice. They were stopped in the way and forced to bury the dead without being provided an opportunity of representing their grievances to their ruler. The organisers were arrested, some of whom were released after whipping, torture and fines. Among those removed to Jammu and imprisoned there, Rasool Sheikh, Ali Pal, Abdul Qadus alias Qoodeh Lala and Sona Shah died in prison.

This tragic incident was soon followed by a clash between weavers and their employers. It was a coincidence that the employers happened, mostly, to be Shias while the weavers were Sunnis. Pandit Raj Kak and his associates successfully channelled it into a 'sectarian' strife to divide

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1 Bamzai, p. 614.

Muslims into two hostile religious camps so that instead of directing their joint efforts and energies against his excesses, these could fritter away in mutual recriminations. Unfortunately they did, in some measure, succeed for a short time but ultimately the Muslims were able to see through the game.

According to Hassan,[1] the clash took a serious turn only after it was rumoured that the Governor Wazir Ratnu had ordered the destruction of all Shias. Obviously the rumour originated from Kashmiri Pandits who manned the administration. The Governor arrived at the scene very late although his residence was not far away. After the rich merchants had been thus destroyed, it was now the turn of the poor working class whom the Government wanted to punish for their recent demonstration of unity and political awakening. The city was handed over to the army which indulged in all sorts of excesses such as plunder, loot and rape. Three hundred Muslims were banished to Jammu; 180 were imprisoned in Ram Nagar jail for various terms; a leading Muslim, Ghulam Mohi-ud-Din Gandroo was fined rupees fifty thousand while one Maulvi Nasir-ud-Din was fined rupees two thousand. Many more were also fined.

STARVING SUBJECTS DROWNED IN WULAR

Mrs. J.C. Murray Aynsley, who was in Kashmir immediately after the great famine, has left the following account :

> " The great cold which set in Kashmir so early in the autumn of 1877 did destroy, to a considerable extent, the crops then ripening. The people, however, would still have had enough grain to have enabled them to get on till such time as they had sown and gathered in the spring crops of the following year; but the Hindu officials, or their emissaries, made a house to house visitation, and, ascertaining how much grain each man possessed, they seized it, paying the normal price, the people having afterwards to buy back from them as much grain as they could afford to take (which was barely enough to support life), at the rate of 20 seers or 40 lbs. to the rupee a rate which would probably average nearly three times the price which these poor people had been paid for the grain thus forcibly taken from them.
>
> Though by treaty the Maharajah of Kashmir acknowledges British supremacy, yet he has hitherto kept his subjects virtually in a state of slavery. If their means of subsistence fail them, they are not allowed to emigrate to India. Some few do escape—witness a small colony

1 Knight, p. 60-61.

established at Nurpur not far from Dharmsala at the time of a famine which prevailed in Kashmir some forty years ago; and a few are also settled in Lahore; but, as a rule, I have been told it is the men alone who contrive to elude the strict watch which is kept over their movements, and that the wives and families remain behind.

During the summer of 1878 the famine seemed almost daily to increase; and a newspaper of 13th August states that "the skeletons of all the inhabitants of a pretty little village nestling at the foot of Gulmarg (twenty eight miles from Srinagar and a favourite resort for summer visitors) had lately been discovered in a gorge above, where they had retreated in their endeavour to escape the Maharajah's chuprassies (or policemen), whose business it was to prevent emigration"; and also adds that "the Lolab Valley was depopulated, and a large extent of the district beyond that became a desert".[1]

The same author describing the division of produce between the farmer and the Government has stated:

"Under the present system when the grain has been trodden out, a division takes place between the farmer and the Government; formerly this was an equal one but the Government had advanced in its demands till *it now requires seven-eighth of the produce of the land near the city and three-fourths of the more remote crops. The straw belongs to the cultivator and he contrives to bribe the watchman or overseer to let him steal his own produce*......This is sent into the market, a high price put upon it, no one is permitted to offer his produce at a lower rate, or sometimes even to dispose of it at all, until all the public corn has been sold."[2]

Another foreign visitor, Missionary Doctor Arthur Neve, who was then posted in Srinagar, has left the following record of the famine:

"This is partly what happened in 1877; but the fatal mistake was the great delay in making the official assessment of the crops that autumn. *In those days all taxes were levied in kind, and the village assessment was not made till the crops were ripening. It was commonly believed by all the Mohammedan cultivators that the delay was deliberate, as the result of orders by Wazir P—to punish the Mohammedans, who had the previous year sent a deputation to complain to His Highness of the exactions of one or two of his chief officials*......And there were gruesome stories of the rapacity of many of the officials in buying up rice and retailing at huge profits, though others contributed to relief

1 Mrs. Ansley, p. 291-292.
2 Mrs. Ansley, p.

funds. *There was* even a rumour that some hundreds of starving people had been purposely drowned in the Wular Lake, to which colour was lent by the sudden death of an eye-witness and informer within a few hours of making the report."[1]

It will be seen that the famine was, partly, the natural result of the deliberately pursued policy with regard to taxation and land distribution. Hundreds of jagirs held by Muslims were arbitrarily confiscated by the Sikhs as well as the Dogras. The land holders, in most cases, had therefore, to leave their homes either for Punjab or some other place in the Valley where they could make a fresh though humble start. The Pandits who had, since the Sikh conquest, become very powerful and had, since the purchase of the territory by Gulab Singh, begun to look upon themselves as masters of the territory, grabbed a considerable part of the landed property, but being essentially non-agriculturists, were unable to manage it.

The Government made no effort to alleviate the sufferings of the people by the import of grain, from the Punjab; perhaps it thought that since the victims of famine were Muslims who formed the great majority of the population and had also been reduced to extreme poverty and want by a ruthless and extortionist rule of nearly half a century, it was a welcome opportunity to get their majority substantially reduced, if not desiredly converted into a minority. In fact, the callousness of its approach and the extremely condemnable methods it adopted to meet the situation were such which would put any man to shame. For instance, one of the measures adopted was to forcibly or by deceipt lure starving bands into large boats, known as "Doongas" under army supervision and then take them to Wular lake where the human cargo was emptied by drowning these wretched starving Muslim subjects of His Highness. Mrs. Ansley testifies:

"Since the above was in the press, accounts of even worse atrocities in Kashmir have appeared in the newspapers. Whole boat-loads of starving people have been conveyed by the Maharajah's officials to the Woolar Lake, and there drowned. One man had strength to swim to shore, and informed an Englishman. This man, soon afterwards died by poison. *How long: how long: when will the Supreme Power rouse itself, which from the Himalayan Olympus dispassionately surveys the continent of India balancing in equal scales the legal privileges of the few and the natural rights of millions?*"[2]

1 Dr. Neve, p. 30 & 31.
2 Mrs. Ansley, p. 292.

This is also confirmed by Dr. Earnest Neve.[1]

On intervention by Dr. Doon who wrote to the Diwan that he had received reports of several people having been drowned in Wular, a Committee consisting of Mr. Hanoi, British representative in Srinagar and Diwan Badri Nath was constituted to make a summary enquiry. Some persons against whom there was a prima facie case were even arrested on orders from Mr. Hanoi but nothing came out of the enquiry; its report, if any, was not published.[2]

The famine was followed by a very severe earth-quake that killed a large number of people. There were many serious shocks though minor shocks continued for a period of nearly three months. The intensity of the earth-quake was greater in Baramula district where almost eighty percent houses were destroyed and people had to live in the open for most of the time; a great number of them died from want of food, shelter and medicines.

MASS MIGRATION TO PUNJAB

The reader will recall that the Valley witnessed, in a short span of 50 years, two earth-quakes of great severity and at least, two famines of unprecedented proportions, bringing in their train, devastating epidemics, all together consuming vast numbers of its inhabitants. These constant visitations would have been normally enough to compel any people to abandon their ancestral abodes in search of food, shelter and surroundings free from epidemics but Kashmiris would have still chosen to stick to their earth-quake-broken, epidemic-infested and famine-stricken homes, as the lofty mountains surrounding them, had, since centuries, hardened their temperament of fear from plunging into the unknown,—a trait inherited from their Brahmin ancestors. During the Sikh regime, Muslims inhabiting the Valley had, for the first time, started moving towards Punjab but the movement remained restricted for several reasons; one of these was that Punjab too was then under Sikh rule and the prospect of escaping from their oppression in Kashmir only to fall into the same cruel hands in the Punjab, acted as a psychological restraint; yet another impediment was the blockade of the passes all along the route and the promulgation of an edict—for the first time in its recorded history—requiring an exit permit.

The position, now obtaining, was altogether different. Punjab had passed into British hands and to be fair to the latter, people there were

1 Neve, p. 31.
2 Hargopal Khasta, p. 224.

definitely not only much better off than the Kashmiris but except for the substitution of political enslavement by the British for the Sikh community, the people inhabiting the province were enjoying peace and tranquillity for the first time in several generations and competing, in a free and healthy atmosphere, for progress and betterment. The small number of Kashmiri Muslims who had succeeded in entering Punjab during the Sikh rule, had, in two generations, taken a big leap forward. They had fared very well in an atmosphere of healthy competition with other brotherly sections of population and made a distinct mark on account of their hard work, industry and general intelligence.

It was, undoubtedly, the added, unbearable burden of excessive taxation, that left practically nothing with the peasant and the shawl-merchant and above all, the dread of begaar in the Northern areas, with hardly 1% chance of a safe return, that generated mass migration. In view of the rising star of British Imperialism over the sub-continent, the doom of Sikh rule could be easily predicted. They had, therefore, hoped that the British would ultimately succeed the Sikhs but the sale of their wonder territory to Gulab Singh, and the subsequent failure of the 1857 revolt, resulting in the consolidation of British power, left them no doubt that the Dogras, enjoying as they did, the support of the Mighty British, had come to stay. In the 1832 famine, Ranjit Singh sent twenty thousand maunds of grain and a sympathetic Governor but the callous Dogras sought to ease the situation by luring bands of starving people on the false promise of food and instead drowned them in the Wular lake. It was like: Out of the frying pan into the fire. These mass drownings despaired them of all hope and afraid to be caught by the Army brigands to be drowned in the lake, groups of people from every town and village were soon on their heels, moving towards the Punjab. The Dogras, unlike the Sikhs, were no longer in a position to keep the routes closed to stop their migration though they tried, through their agents, to discourage it, not out of any love for the Muslims but simply out of fear that the migration of the people en masse, may at last rouse the dormant British conscience to rectify the injustice, unparalleled in human history, of having sold them like a herd of sheep to a heartless family.

The Sikhs had introduced a permit system known as Rahdari which prohibited any resident from going to Punjab without a permit issued by the Governor. On the one hand it afforded an opportunity to the regime to enrich itself by extracting money from traders and travellers, on the other, it also helped to prevent the escape of the victims of their misrule and oppression.

The Dogras who taxed everything except air and water (because of its abundance) could not but continue the profitable system. They had stronger reasons to adopt it in that the Punjab now being in the hands of the British, their overlords-cum-benefactors, they feared the consequences of their reign of terror and plunder becoming extensively known in the Punjab.

When, however, the ravages of famine reached its climax and the widespread popular clamour for permission to migrate to British India, assumed threatening proportions, the Dogra Government had to cancel the Rahdari system. Says Sir Lawrence:

> "Many attempted to escape to the Punjab but at the barriers troops were stationed to prevent the migration of the people. At the end of 1878, however, the system of Rahdari under which no man could leave the Valley without permission, was given up and some of the weak survivors tottered over the passes to the Punjab, many dying in the way."[1]

The lifting of the ban witnessed a stampede; it appeared as if a bund had suddenly collapsed, for a sea of humanity, drawn from every town and village, was moving towards the snow-clad passes, on their way to the land of hope—the British India. Some came via Kohala, there is a Kashmiri bazaar on the old Pindi-Murree-Srinagar route between Burban and Deval; some fled towards Hazara, there is a Kashmiri bazaar at Mansehra; others trecked through Kishtwar to Nurpur, Dalhousie and Simla; some travelled via Jammu to Sialkot but the great mass adopted the Salt route that brought them to Gujrat which acted as a base for their dispersal in different directions such as Gujranwala, Lahore, Amritsar, Ludhiana, Jhelum, Wazirabad, Jalalpur etc. A few families dropped in the way and settled in Reasi and Poonch.

The ghastly scene can hardly be described. Most of them were barefooted because they couldn't even afford the home-spun grassy sandals which their more fortunate brethren were wearing on the journey. Hardly a few may have had adequate clothes for protection against Sun, rain, storms or snow on their long journey. It would be untruthful and an exaggeration to say that the rest were ill-clad because the term itself assumes the existence of clothes, though inadequate; in truth they had hardly any respectable clothes, for, each garment they wore, must have had dozens of patches stitched. The reader may well visualise a mass of humanity thus sullenly moving towards the Punjab under great weight

1 Lawrence, p, 215.

of emotions on account of having been forced to turn their backs towards their hearths and homes, with their little belongings on their heads, the heart-breaking cries of the old, infirm and women on account of hunger, heat, cold and illness, a great majority almost dragging their wearied feet, and above all, hundreds of hungry babies in each caravan, hanging over their backs or sucking the milkless, long dried-up breasts of their mothers. It was only the hope that they were soon going to be delivered from this wholly oppressive surrounding, that sustained them in this otherwise hopeless situation—what a terrible scene it must have been. Thousands must have died on their way and though buried on the way-side, some must have naturally fallen prey to vultures and beasts that frequented the route. Their agonies did not spare them even after death.

Therefore, the migration was so extensive that according to the 1891 Punjab census report, 1,11,775 Muslims born in Kashmir were counted as having settled in the Punjab,[1] while those who settled in distant places like Delhi, Gaya, Patna, Madras, Bombay, Calcutta, Lucknow and even as far away as Kathmandu, may have also counted in thousands. There is a Kashmiri bazaar in Kathmandu.[2]

PANDIT ASCENDENCY

Dogras obtained the country by treachery and purchase and subjugated it with force but they had no experience of administration. Literacy among them was practically zero. Even in the twentieth century, we have instances of illiterate Dogras appointed as Heads of departments. Even as late as 1920, Mirpur had an illiterate Dogra in the person of Makhan Singh, as Wazir-e-Wazarat i.e. Deputy Commissioner. Whenever he signed an official paper, he would tell his clerk, unmindful of the surroundings,

"دستخط مکھن سنگھے دے ، پر جمے داری کلرکے دی"

(Signatures are mine but the responsibility is of the clerk).

The result was that the Dogras had to rely very heavily upon the Kashmiri Pandits who took the fullest advantage of the ignorance and helplessness of their rulers. Says Charles Girdlestone :

"State appointments are obtained either through interest (farming out) or by right of inheritance. In each family of Pandits, who have

1 Imperial Gazetteer of India, 1909. J. & Kashmir.
2 As told by Justice Sharma of the Nepal Supreme Court.

almost the monopoly of subordinate posts, one man will usually be found in the service of Government assisted by his brothers or other near relatives though the latter get no pay from the treasury...."

Paid a monthly salary of Rs. 30/- which was usually in arrears, according to Lawrence, the monthly expenditure of the Tehsildar was between Rs. 300/- to Rs. 500/-. Says the Settlement Commissioner :

"Apart from the fact that he could run into Srinagar whenever he wished, he always kept with him in the tehsil a number of relatives and friends known as Mutabir to whom he delegated the duties of his office. As these men received no pay from the State, they took it from the villagers and the more friends and relatives the Tehsildars had, the worse was it for the villagers. This system of Mutabir obtained in all ranks of the service and I have known instances of Chaukidar (village watchman) delegating his duties to friends."

And again :

"It was no new thing, for peculation and oppression had been equally common in the time of the Pathan and Sikhs but peculation was placed on a safe and intelligent basis when the administration was practically vested in the hands of the Pandits of Kashmir. In revenue matters in the East, it is always right to trace effects to their first causes and in Kashmir the revenue administration proceeds from the Patwari, the village accountant, and he is a Pandit. On cramped pieces of paper or birch bark which he hides away in the deep pocket of his ample gown, he enters the area of the holding of each village. It has been pointed out that the Patwari keeps three editions of this statement of holding, 'one for himself which may be supposed to be near the truth, one for the Tehsildar and another for the villagers, the two latter being prepared with a view to convincing each side of the excellent bargain he has secured..' Over the Patwari was a small band of Pandits who were employed in the tehsil in various revenue capacities but they did not condescend to manipulate the taxation of individuals and dealt with villages as a whole. Over the Patwari and the tehsil Pandits was a Tehsildar and one or two Naib-Tehsildars, mostly Pandits. There were 15 tehsils and these tehsils were divided into three districts or wazarats which were presided over by officers known as Wazir-e-Wazarat, all of whom were Pandits. These Wazirs were subordinate to the Hakim-i-Ala or Governor of Kashmir and his revenue establishment known as Daftar-i-Diwani, was composed entirely of Pandits."

Laments Lawrence :

"It is to be regretted that the interests of the State and of the people should have been entrusted to one class of men and still more to be regretted that these men, the Pandits, should always systematically combine to defraud the State and to rob the people. The Pandits are loyal to one another and the village Patwari knows that when awkward questions are asked, he has friends at the tehsil, at the headquarters of the Wazir-e-Wazarat and in the Daftar-e-Diwani. It was a powerful ring of iron inside which the village tax-payer lay fascinated and if he were wise, silent!"[1]

This earned the Kashmiri Pandits many a popular but unpleasant epithet which have now become a part of our history. One such proverb says, "Batta Yar, Berozgar": a Pandit is your friend only so long as he is unemployed, which means that after getting into service, one's acquaintance cannot prevent him from fleecing you. Another one says: "Batta chchu gratta": the Pandit is like a stone-mill, meaning thereby that he is callous and heartless in realising his 'pound of flesh'. Yet another proverb of those dark days is: "Batta Kar, gatta kar". Pandit rule is a dark rule or Pandit administration is a dark administration.

Kashmiris are apt to resort to coining of proverbs to describe a situation. For instance, one of the Dogra Governors, Wazir Ratnu, was very cruel and corrupt. People were tired of his misrule. Someone coined the following phrase which became quickly a popular cry: "Wazir 'Talih, tah Kashir Baleh": Kashmir will recover from its illness only if the Wazir runs away. When due to heavy taxation which left people practically with nothing for themselves resulting in a terrible famine and yet the tax-collectors were still after them, the following proverb was coined to describe the position: "Batta batta, teh piada pata", meaning, while we are starving even for a morsel of bread, the tax-collector haunts us with his tax-demands. The office of the Kotwal (police chief of a thana) was farmed out for a fixed period. One can imagine the fate of people in such surroundings. The corruption was so rampant that almost every incident was utilised for illegal exactions so much so that if a boy or girl got drowned, the parents were arrested on a charge of murder!

The Dogras termed their rule as the rule of Dharma. So the following anonymously composed verse rapidly became famous:

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1 Lawrence, p. 401.

"بود ورد زبان اهل خراج
دہرم کا راج ، ملک کا تاراج "

Trans:

It was on the lips of every
tax-payer that the rule of Dharma,
meant the pillage of the country.

A contingent of Dogra troops equipped with pieces of artillery took part in the Afghan war of 1878, on the British side.[1]

LUKE-WARM BRITISH CONCERN BEGINS

In early 1881, Lord Rippon who had been appointed Viceroy in 1880 on the return of Gladstone to power, paid a short visit to Srinagar. He had previously held many important appointments at home connected with Indian administration. In 1861 he was Under-Secretary for India and in 1866 he held the office of the Secretary of State for India. He was, therefore, already fully posted with facts as they obtained in Kashmir, both of mal-administration and heavy taxation as well as of the extremely sad plight of its Muslim inhabitants. Immediately on his return to Calcutta, he despatched a senior English officer of the department of Finance to look into the state of finances of the State and suggest improvements. It seems that the brief visit was undertaken primarily to get personally acquainted with the utter desolation that prevailed in Kashmir. On his return, he wrote to Lord Kimberly, the Secretary of State for India:

> "Any disturbance which continued misgovernment might create in Kashmir would be actually felt on the frontiers of Afghanistan; the connection of Kashmir and its dependent chiefships would, in all probability, be severed and grave political complications might easily arise."[2]

Meanwhile, moved by the accounts of human miseries of the people and the callous attitude of the Government, Lord Kimberly, sent the following letter to the Viceroy:

> "As to the urgent need for reforms in the administration of the State of Jammu and Kashmir, there is, unfortunately, no room for doubt.

1 Inside Kashmir, p. 41.
2 Hassan, p. 580.

It may, indeed, be a question whether having regard to the circumstances under which the Sovereignty of the country was entrusted to the present Hindoo Ruling family, the intervention of the British Government on behalf of the Mohammedan population has not already been for long delayed."

It seems that the British Government was not unmindful of the distressing happenings and did have a sense of guilt in being responsible for the sufferings of the Muslim majority of the State on account of having sold them to a family which was ignorant of the virtues that go with kingship. Ranbir Singh had six sons, three from one wife, a fourth from the second wife and two from a concubine. Pratap Singh, the eldest who was to succeed Ranbir Singh, was hardly 32 years old. It was, for this reason that Lord Rippon wrote to the Secretary of State for India in 1884 :

"The British did not take the action earlier conceiving that a favourable opportunity would present itself on the occurrence of a fresh succession—an event which seemed unlikely to be long postponed. When that event takes place we consider that it will be our duty to impress upon the Cashmere Government its obligations to its own subjects, and to see that the reforms which are so urgently needed are no longer postponed ."

Gulab Singh, as per Hassan, acting on the advice of his Pandit advisers, confiscated the Jagirs of all leading Muslims. Farde-i-Tarikh, a chronicle in persian by Faqirullah Kanth, and preserved in the Kashmir University Library Srinagar, gives details about the confiscation of jagirs and the *en masse* dismissal of Muslims from Services. The measure was decided upon in a meeting attended by Ghulab Singh and his Pandit and Dogra Advisers and held at Habbak near Hazrat Bal. It aimed at complete elimination of Muslim influence in the administrative and economic spheres. The marriage tax was increased to Rs. 6-0 during the reign of Ranbir Singh. Hassan states that a peasant had to bear the burden of 60 officials who directly ruled over him. During his reign every peasant had also to pay a special tax to meet the expenses of the Maharaja's and his family's clothing which amounted to six seers of rice.[1]

Gulab Singh, in celebration of his acquisition of the Muslim territory erected several temples but reference may be confined only to the Gadadhar temple at Srinagar adjacent to his palace with the mace bearing the image of the Hindu god Vishnu, as destroyer of

1 Hassan, p. 574.

enemies. The image was brought from Gaya (Bihar) by Gulab Singh himself. Gold, weighing 50 lbs, was used for laying the cover of its dome.

From the days of its construction centuries ago, hundreds of vendors and shopkeepers used to set up a market in the Srinagar Jamia Masjid on Fridays. Ranbir Singh stopped the practice by force and instead set up a new market near the third bridge which was given the name of Maharaj Ganj:

ہے کہاں روز مکافات اے خدائے دیر گیر

The oppression and maladministration touched new heights during the later years of Ranbir Singh's rule. The failure of at least two attempts on his life had increased his dependence upon his advisers. On a visit to Achha Bal, several complaints of excessive realisation and torture were brought to his notice but instead of taking action to purge the administration of at least the more corrupt, he fell a victim to the conspiracy of Governor Ratnu and his Pandit subordinates with the result that the complainants were stripped naked and thrown into the Verinag spring. The local Wazir-e-Wazarat Mian Fateh Din resigned in protest. His resignation was not accepted; he was dismissed and his jagir confiscated. This further destroyed faith in the ruler and at the same time emboldened the corrupt administrat'on to fleece the poor people. Ranbir Singh corrupted a section of the Maulvis by daily cash grants, called Rozina. He encouraged propaganda against the Ahl-e-Hadis who were advocating Jehad. Ahmed Tarabali and Mir Yasin Khan-yari spear-headed the opposition in Kashmir valley while Akram Suhrawardy, a direct disciple of Sayed Ahmed Brelvi and Sain Sher Mohammad resisted the movement in Kishtwar and Jammu.[1]

As per review notes of this book by Sahibzada Hassan Shah, former Principal Amar Singh College Srinagar and Director Research, Kashmir Government, Ranbir Singh seriously doubted the legitimacy of Pratap Singh and thought him to be an illegitimate son of the Rani and her Brahmin paramour. Muslims under Mian Lal Din and Haji Mukhtar Shah and non-Dogra Hindus under Sardar Lalman of Mirpur rallied round Ram Singh and Amar Singh to oppose his accession. In this connection a widely-attended meeting was held in the house of Mian Lal Din at Fateh Kadal, Srinagar. Details of the meeting are contained in a manuscript, named Wajize-ut-twarikh by Mulla Abdul Nabi. Both the brothers are credited with pro-Muslim leanings.[2]

Wazir Punnu, the Governor of Kashmir and notorious for his corruption as well as repression, commenting upon the state of economic

1 & 2 Review notes by Sahibzada Hassan.

distress, stated in open Court, that so long as it did not actually burn into ashes, this side of Ramban (a town on Chenab river which divides Jammu from Kashmir valley), the destruction could not be termed as of any consequence. It was during his governorship that shameless methods of punishment were frequently resorted to. His contemporary, Hassan, has recorded only three instances, perhaps, as examples, of what was happening at the time. In the first instance, one Ghulam Rasool Mir, a Headman, was ordered by Thakur Koth, the Tehsildar of Zainagher in Baramula district, to be stripped naked; his private organ was tied to a rope and his daughter was then forced to hold it and take him round the village. In the next instance, the Headman of Botaingo and his wife were stripped naked; a hornet was sent for from the shop of a blacksmith and the poor husband was forced to press the private parts of his naked wife with the instrument. In the third instance, the wife of one Sabir Butt, a peasant from Lolab Valley, was stripped naked and a burning stick of firewood was thrust into her private part.[1]

The Wazir had to be dismissed because of the pressure exerted by the British.

Under British pressure, the Maharaja appointed a State Council in 1882. It had six members from Kashmir valley, namely, Suraj Mal, Hiranand, Zaina Kak, Akbar Beg, Mirza Ghulam Mohi-ud-Din and Khawaja Sanaullah Shawl with Diwan Badri Nath Chief Justice, as President. It dealt with financial and administrative matters. As its capacity was only advisory and the Maharaja was at heart deadly against its existence because he considered it an encroachment on his right to rule, it was not able to make any valuable or effective contribution.

Ranbir Singh died on 12th September, 1885, and was succeeded by his eldest son Pratap Singh. Ranbir appointed a special officer with considerable staff to look after the European visitors to Kashmir. He appointed an officer on Special Duty at Calcutta which was then the seat of the Governor-General. A number of Special Officers were also appointed in the border districts of Kangra, Sialkot, Gujrat, Jhelum, Rawalpindi and Hazara to look after the interests of Kashmir State. A number of Rest houses and Dak bungalows were constructed on the Jhelum Valley road as well as in Srinagar, Gilgit, Ladakh and other places for the benefit of visitors with coolies, horses and palkies at hand for instant use.

The Prince of Wales visited Jammu in 1875 and stayed for three days in a hastily constructed palace. In 1876 the British Government made him a present of 5 thousand British-made rifles and some

1 Hassan, p. 586.

pieces of artillery. It was in 1877 on the occasion of the Delhi Durbar held to celebrate the acceptance of the title of Qaisar-i-Hind by Queen Victoria that the title of Inder Mehendar, Sipar-i-Sultanat-e-Englishia, General of the British Army and Masheer-i-Qaiser-i-Hind was conferred upon him and his gun salute formally raised from 19 to 21. According to Hargopal Khasta, "the Maharaja was so much religious-minded that he hastened to erect a temple wherever a Sadhu took up his abode." Hargopal, who was a contemporary and an important official of the State Government, admits that the catching of fish had been completely prohibited.

Ranbir went on frequent pilgrimages to Hardawar, Gaya, Banaras, Ayodia, Mathra, Bindra ban, Prayag, Raj, Mattan and Amar Nath and spent large amounts on Sadhus and the maintenance of temples. Hardawar, Gaya and Banaras were in receipt of regular cash grants. During the Holi festival, one month's additional pay was given to the Army. A Sanskrit school was opened at Banaras. Hargopal has further stated that Ranbir also used to visit Muslim shrines and make offerings; that the Jamia Masjid Srinagar which had been locked by the Sikhs was restored to the Muslims and that a stream was brought to the mosque to facilitate ablutions on the spot. On the occasion of Eids, Muslim soldiers used to get one month's additionl pay and special prayers used to be arranged in Kashmir.

In 1866, General Hoshiara captured Malori Kote which is 8 miles from Yasin. In 1868, Gohar Aman's sons raised the banner of revolt in the frontier region. They were defeated and their women-folk arrested, brought to Srinagar and interned there. They were still in prison when Hargopal's book was published in early eighties.[1] In 1870 Wazir Rahmat of Yasin came to Jammu and was made to promise, under duress, the surrender of Hunza to the Maharaja. General Devi Singh accompanied him back at the head of an army but the Hunza people declined to accept the position and attacked his force. Devi Singh was defeated and ran away. Wazir Rehmat supported by Pehlwan Bahadur, the son of Gauher Aman, then marched down to Gilgit and besieged the town. General Hoshiara and Col. Bije Singh, who were sent from Srinagar, defeated them and restored the status quo. Shahzad Khan was arrested with the help of his brother Eesa Bahadur and imprisoned in Srinagar where he died in internment. During those very days, the people at Boonji also rose in revolt but the same was crushed and the ring leaders severely punished.

Ranbir Singh reorganised the Revenue, P.W.D. and the Judicial departments. He also fixed cash salaries of its employees. The Penal law was consolidated and promulgated in the shape of an Act since known

1 Hargopal, p. 208.

as the Ranbir Penal Code. He also organised the Police Department and opened a few hospitals which distributed medicines free of cost. A school was opened in Jammu which also provided books, free of cost. With the setting up of a press, the Jammu and Kashmir Government Gazette was published for the first time in 1882. He introduced postal service, costing 2 paisa. In 1877, a telegraph service was introduced between Sialkot, Jammu and Kashmir and 5 years later, between Kashmir, Gilgit and Askardu. He laid down certain gardens, besides repairing old Mughal gardens. Several temples were built at Government expense. Ranbir Singh also reorganised the army which was divided into 4 parts. Some regiments were named after Hindu heroes such as Ragho Pratap, Shiv, Bashishar, Lodhar, and Hanuman. Other units were named after Ram Gopal, Devi, Gajadhar, Bijli Gopal, Lachhman, Narayan and Pratap. An Artillery unit was known as Sher Bachha and another one as Dehra Sher Bachha. A General was paid Rs. 500, a Colonel Rs. 200, a Kamidan Rs. 100, Major and Adjutant Rs. 50, Munshi and Subedars Rs. 25, Jamedar Rs. 18, Havildar, Rs. 14, Naik, Rs. 11/4/-, Surgeon Rs. 14, and Sepoys Rs. 9 per month out of which Rs. 3 was deducted as costs of rations. The Military terms were changed into Sanskrit by Colonel Dwarka Nath and Pandit Sohono. Promotions and demotions were awarded at the time of transfer when the whole unit appeared before the Maharaja. The political prisoners or army deserters were housed in cantonments but the more dangerous among them used to be interned in various forts. Ranbir Singh also reformed the Dogri alphabet by introducing simpler letters than the old Sanskrit ones. Jammu Gazette was published in this alphabet which, however, was on the pattern of Sanskrit.

Ranbir Singh appointed his eldest son Pratap Singh as heir-apparent; the second son Ram Singh who was Commander-in-Chief, was given Ram Nagar in jagir whereas Amar Singh, the third son, who looked after day-to-day administration, was granted Bhadarwah as jagir. It appears that there was some trouble between the people of Bhadarwah and the representatives of Amar Singh due to the latter's oppressive exactions. Some of them were arrested but ultimately, the jagir was cancelled and Amar Singh was granted a new jagir in Bisohli. Ranbir Singh also had a daughter who was given Ramkot as jagir. Pratap Singh was married to a princess from Chamba in 1860. She died in 1873. In 1869, the judicial system, as in vogue in British India, was adopted and at the same time, the Stamp Act was also enforced. The Chilki coin replaced the Kham rupee in 1862.

FAMILY INTRIGUES, REGENCY, SUPPORT BY HINDU INDIA

Pratap Singh being the eldest son, ascended the throne. Ram Singh was younger than him and Amar Singh, the father of Hari Singh, the

youngest of the three. Lachhman Singh was born to a second wife while Hukam Singh and Nar Singh were born to a concubine. Others received allowances from the treasury. Pratap Singh was of an unimpressive physique; his health was also indifferent. He had received education in 'Dogri', 'Sanskrit', 'Persian' and 'English'. Soon after his accession, the Viceroy sent him a communication dated 14th September, 1885, emphasizing the dire necessity of introducing reforms in the interests of good government. He was also required to accept a British Resident. It is no doubt true that the demand to station a Resident was largely motivated by the anxiety created by the extension of Russian influence to the Pamirs but it must also be conceded in fairness to the British that it was also partly motivated by their desire to see an improvement in its internal conditions. After all, there was no State in the Princely India, including Hyderabad, which far exceeded in population as well as revenue, that did not have a British representative called 'Resident'. Jammu and Kashmir was not an independent country but had, like every other State, accepted British paramountcy. Unfortunately, the Maharaja was surrounded by short-sighted and semi-literate advisers. He sent the following reply:

> "I do not hesitate to admit that the existing state of affairs in Cashmere urgently requires the introduction of substantial reforms in the administration of the country, but I beg to assure you that nothing shall be spared on my part to prove beyond any possibility of doubt that it is my ambition to make my country a well-governed State in alliance with the Government of India."[1]

The British Government, however, was determined to get a Resident appointed and the Maharaja had no alternative but to accept the position. Consequently Sir Olivier St. John was appointed as the first Resident. He was shortly replaced first by Plowden and then by Col. R. Parry Nisbet, Commissioner Delhi. Both were men of great energy and foresight. Certain letters fell into the hands of Mr. Nisbet apparently showing that Pratap Singh was in treasonable correspondence with the Czarist regime. There is, however, a general belief in the State, it may be said in fairness to Pratap, that he was a man of different disposition and it was actually Amar Singh who had managed in the name of Pratap Singh to secure letters from across the Pamirs without the knowledge of his brother, so as to clear the way for his own accession. When the news of the Maharaja's supposed links with the Czar became known, there was resentment both in London as well as Calcutta. The British Govern-

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1 Bamzai, p. 625.

ment, therefore, decided to annex the state but unfortuntely, before it could be accomplished, certain developments took place which stood in their way, and changed the course of history. The Maharaja even wrote a letter of abdication and placed it in the hands of the Resident.

What type of a man Amar Singh was, may better be judged in the light of what his elder brother Pratap Singh has said of him. In one of his letters to the Viceroy, he wrote:

> "And now your Excellency can judge what my position at present is, and how much I am slighted in the Durbar, my enemies staring with pride and triumph into my eyes very often and showing all possible contempt.
>
> My chief enemy, and in the present circumstances, enemy of the State, who has taken a fancy to become the ruler of the Kashmir State, and who envies my position since long time, is, I am sorry to say, my own youngest brother, Raja Amar Singh. It is only now that I have found him out in his true colours, and all doubts as to his ill-motive have been removed. Since the very day I succeeded to the throne, he caused to set afloat all sorts of rumours against me about my incapacity, insanity, and so on.
>
> Many a time he was directly caught in conspiring against me. He encouraged, pecunarily and otherwise, people connected with the press with the only object of their writing against my person, vilifying me, and causing to circulate the worst rumours against me. Having convenient access to Europeans, and so on and the Residents, to which I never objected, having no suspicion regarding his doings, he filled their ears, as often as possible, with such black stories about me, directly and indirectly, thinking very well that by his doing so he will be proclaimed Ruler of Jammu and Kashmir territories in that case. To almost every Resident, and specially to Cononel R. Parry Nisbet, he appeared to be the most reliable and intimately connected informant and all should have believed in what he said; and I have every reason to believe that all rumours which reached the Government against me must have been received through this, and this source alone.
>
> Being disgusted with his unworthy conduct, and having ample proofs to silence him in his very face, I twice resolved to order him to remove himslef to his jagir, and have nothing to do in the capital. On both these occasions, being informed of my resolution against him, he entered my room, where there was no one except him and my-

self, shedding childish tears, throwing his turban on my feet, imploring for mercy, promising all goodwill and hearty loyalty for the future, and asking for pardon as my dear brother, humblest slave. After all, he was my youngest brother very dear to me; his lovely young face is still liked by me, and on both these occasions my blood was naturally warm for him, and I was completely moved by his entreaties, and pardoned him after all. To prove to him that my heart was quite in sympathy with him—and I truly loved him as my dear brother—I, at his request, bestowed upon him the rich jagir of Bhadderwa, in exchange to the comparatively poor Bisoli which he had got during the time of my late father, and again made him Prime Minister of all. But, as was known afterwards, he was never slow in conspiring against me, even then. Regaining my confidence twice, and knowing I was quite confident and entirely at ease from his side, he possessed redoubled power and influence in the State, which is natural, and every State official was made to believe and look upon him as my powerful assistant and adviser. All these advantages he brought in force against me for the gain of his one sole object in view, above mentioned, and he was able enough to create a strong party of his own among my officials, giving them all hopes of future success and prosperity, in case they remained faithful only to him and join with him in overthrowing me. This promise he has fulfilled now in promoting those who joined him, and degrading those, my sincerely faithful servants, who stood by me amidst all temptations.

Colonel R. Parry Nisbet, as soon as he was installed as British Resident at my Court, I looked upon him as my safe friend, and thought that my difficulties were at an end, because I knew him to be one of the sincere friends of my father and good supporter to myself. I must also confess that for some little time in the beginning he was my sympathiser to some extent, but it is very difficult to say what made him entirely change his motives towards me and to fall in the very clutches of the very same secret and powerful enemy of mine, Raja Amar Singh. This sudden change must be as astonishing to all others as it was to me, so it is the most difficult task to investigate fully into the cause of this sudden change of his policy.

To overcome such difficulties as I was labouring under, at the hands of powerful intriguers who were using all sorts of influence within and without, I asked for the loan of two well-experienced officers from the Government of India to act as my councillors, and I must express my deep and heartfelt gratitude for the kindness with which the Government of India conceded to my request. But excellent men as these were, they also changed their former attitude at once

as soon as the Resident changed his, and I believe that they must have done so naturally, as they are more dependent upon the good will of the Representative of the British Government under whose employment they have spent almost all their life, and to whom they owe all they have got, than myself, whom they are only lent to, so I was soon being made powerless.

At this juncture the brewing plot of the much-talked-of-letters, alleged to have been written by me, was brought into force. Almost all the rumours about the source from which they are purported to have reached the Resident are false, and without any foundation whatever. Solely Raja Amar Singh was at the bottom of the whole thing. These letters are nothing but most daring forgeries, and there was none more daring than my blood relation,........"[1]

The Indian National Congress had already come into being. There were many newspapers in the country owned and run by Hindus, foremost among them was the Amrita Bazar Patrika, published from Calcutta. It was the most influential newspaper representing the Hindus though styling itself as representing the voice of nationalist India. Calcutta was also then the seat of the Viceroy. The paper first published an autographed copy of the letter sent by Pratap Singh to the Viceroy denying the allegations levelled against him and claiming that the letter of abdication was secured under duress. This raised a storm of protest in the Hindu press which threw in its full weight behind the Dogra dynasty. Lala Amba Prasad Soofi some-how managed to steal from the Kashmir Residency, the relevant top-secret file which included a minute recorded by Mr. H.N. Durand, Foreign Secretary to the Government of India, showing British anxiety to assume direct control of the frontier districts. Amrita Bazar Patrika published the secret note which further inflamed the Hindu public opinion and heightened their agitation. Unfortunately for the Kashmiris, particularly the Muslims, two members of the British parliament, William Digby and Mr. Bradlaugh added their powerful voice to the chorus of the socalled nationalist India. Besides agitating the question in the House of Commons, Mr. Digby wrote several articles, later published in book-form, and captioned "Condemned Unheard". This unnerved the British officers on the spot. Consequently Mr. Durand wrote the following letter to Lord Dufferin, the Viceroy :

"If we annex Gilgit or put an end to suzerainty of Kashmir or the petty principalities of the neighbourhood, and above all, if we put British

1 W. Digby, p. 167-168.

troops into Kashmir just now, we shall run a risk of turning the Durbar against us and thereby increase the difficulty of the position."[1]

The British Government, therefore, very unwisely and, no doubt, very cowardly, abandoned the decision of direct annexation. Commenting on this decision, Pandit Prem Nath Bazaz has observed:

"Political India in the eighties of the last century was the champion of the rights of native princes. It was considered a patriotic duty by the leaders and the nationlist press to protect the princes against the onslaughts of the foreign Government. Irrational patriotism considered native rule, however corrupt, absolutist, despotic and cruel as preferable to the domination by the British. Besides, the Maharaja being a Hindu and the ruler of the holy land of Kashmir, became an additional reason for the Indian leaders to see that he was not deposed. A storm was raised over the imbroglio in which the voice of the Amrita Bazar Patrika of Calcutta was the loudest. The Viceroy was very much perturbed and annoyed to read the document in the press. The storm raised by nationalist India over Kashmir had upset the apple cart of the British. They, therefore, abandoned the idea of deposing the Maharaja and instead forced him to accept a Council of Regency as already mentioned. Looking back at the events after the lapse of nearly seventy years, one cannot refrain from observing that this time the decision of the British was most unfortunate for the people of Kashmir. Had the British boldly stuck to their resolve, no matter with what purpose, deposed the Maharaja and installed their own direct administration, it would have speedily introduced modernism in the Valley."[2]

Therefore, in March 1889, the Maharaja was presented by the Resident, in close collaboration with his own brothers, with the draft of a proclamation, announcing surrender of his powers in favour of a Regency Council with his youngest brother Amar Singh as its Chairman, retaining for himself practically nothing but the titular headship of the State.

The Council consisted of five members, none of whom was a Muslim. They were the Maharaja's two younger brothers, a British officer and two Hindus, Rai Bahadur Pandit Sooraj Kaul and Rai Bahadur Pandit Bhag Ram which meant that apart from a representative of the Governemnt of India, Dogras and Kashmiri Pandits received equal representation. The proclamation was the result of an arrangement arrived at between the Resident and Pratap Singh; of course, his two brothers were

1 Inside Kashmir, p. 49.
2 Freedom Struggle.

acting as agents of the former. When the proclamation was sent to the Viceroy, he accepted it with the following communication to the Maharaja :

"Notwithstanding the ample resources of your State, your treasury was empty; corruption and disorder prevailed in every department and every office; your Highness was still surrounded by low and unworthy favourites, and the continued misgovernment of your State was becoming, every day, a more serious source of anxiety."

The agitation against the set up again sprang up from Hindu India, spearheaded by the Amrita Bazar Patrika. It was actually to appease the Hindus who were becoming very vocal through the Indian National Congress that the British Government did not deem it expedient to include even a single Muslim in the Regency Council. In 1891, Pratap Singh was appointed President of the Council while Amar Singh stepped down to become its Vice-President. Naturally the Maharaja was still not happy with his position and wrote the following letter to the Resident on 29th January, 1895:

"I am supposed to be no factor in the machinery of the State and nobody cares for me."

In another letter dated the 7th September, 1895, he wrote :

"I am not even allowed to sign papers for the Resident. I cannot even appoint a Tehsildar ......Really I am quite helpless; nothing is in my hands."

It may be again mentioned that it was Amar Singh who prevented even the passing of routine official papers to Pratap Singh. Rules of business were, however, amended in 1896 and the Maharaja was given the power to ask for proceedings of the Council and in case of disagreement with its decisions, he could refer it back for reconsideration. Every Council member was also required to keep him abreast with the detailed working of his departments.

Bengal was partitioned by Lord Curzon in 1905. Under the partition plan, the existing Bangla Desh together with certain other areas which have now gone to India, including the whole of Assam, was constituted into a separate province with Dacca as its capital. It was an overwhelmingly Muslim majority province. Hindu India was extremely an-

gry because being advanced in Western education, they could easily foresee that in any democratisation of administration which was bound to come sooner or later on the western pattern, the power in the province would go to Muslims on account of being in a majority. The Congress was in the forefront of the campaign for the annulment of the partition. Some Bengali Hindus resorted to terrorism and a few Englishmen lost their lives in isolated bomb attacks. As a concession to Hindu India and as evidence of its bonafides, the British Government abolished the Regency Council and in a special Durbar held at Jammu in 1905, Lord Curzon personlly read the proclamation of the dissolution of the Council and restoration of more powers to the Maharaja. Once again, Muslims of Kashmir had to suffer at the hands of Hindus who, regardless of the merits of the situation, blindly rushed to the aid of the Maharaja simply because he happened to be a Hindu while his subjects were Muslims.

Under the new arrangement, a Council of Ministers was appointed. The advice of the Resident in the matter of the preparation of budget and the appointment of Ministers and important officials had, however, to be accepted.

Raja Ram Singh, Commander-in-Chief. died in 1899 and was succeeded by Raja Amar Singh. It has been already mentioned that Amar Singh played a prominent role in the Resident's moves against Pratap Singh and consequently was the man who benefited the most from the arrangement. Supported by the Resident, he was virtually the de facto Maharaja from the date of the setting up of the Regency Council in 1889 upto its dissolution in 1905. Hari Singh was born in 1895. Pratap was till then without a male issue. Having failed to raise a son and bitter against his brothers, he tried to take a new wife towards the close of the 19th century, under the advice, and with the support, of some of his personal advisers but Amar Singh manipulated things in such a way that the fickle-minded and opium-addicted Maharaja dare not do so. However, a few years later, the birth of an heir was suddenly announced but it is difficult to say definitely as to whether he was really born to the Rani and in case it was so, whether the offspring was really fathered by Pratap Singh. It cannot be ignored that Pratap Singh had no child, male or female, until then; having failed to raise a child in youth, it is difficult to believe that he could do so in old age. In this connection one cannot fail to take note of Chankaya's Artha-shastra in which it is laid down, as an important principle of Statecraft that, if a King fails to raise an heir himself, he should encourage amorous relations between his wife and their servants and failing even then, (the wife may be barren) he should secretly arrange to secure a new-born baby and claim

that he was born unto his wife. This of course is justified by Chankaya in the interests of the continuity of Kingship in the dynasty. One can easily imagine the discomfiture it must have caused to Amar Singh. The birth of the heir was celebrated with great pomp and show for three days but only a few months had passed when the prince died in mysterious circumstances. It was commonly believed that the death was unnatural. This further embittered Pratap Singh who now had nothing but total hatred against his brother and nephew. It was now clear that the gaddi would pass into the hands of Amar Singh or more likely to his son Hari Singh who was being specially brought up under the personal supervision of the Resident. There is no doubt at all that Pratap Singh wanted to prevent the throne from falling into their hands and that is why he appointed Jagat Dev Singh, the second son of Sir Baldev Singh, the ruler of Poonch, as his adopted son and took him to Srinagar to be brought up under his own supervision. Jagat Dev was born in 1905. The adoption took place in 1907 with the express permission of Lord Minto, the Governor General, when he visited the State and spent a few days hunting in the interior of Poonch. In a formal Durbar held at Jammu and attended by Minto, Jagat Dev was proclaimed as adopted son and heir-apparent. Hari Singh, then a small lad, temporarily acted as daman-bardar of the Viceroy.[1]

Amar Singh and his supporters, finding that they had been out-witted by Pratap Singh and his advisers, started building up pressure on the weak Maharaja to rescind the decision. They had the tacit support of the Resident, who thought that Hari Singh having been brought up and tutored under English teachers would suit them more than Jagat Dev. Amar Singh also wielded considerable influence in the Dogra hierarchy. Therefore, the Maharaja once again succumbed to the mounting pressure and announced, as was required of him, that Jagat Dev had been adopted merely for religious purposes and that it would have no bearing on the question of succession to the throne. Amar Singh died soon afterwards. A few years later and towards the closing years of Pratap Singh's rule, Hari Singh was appointed Commander-in-Chief. He repaid the debt of gratitude he owed to the British in the family tussle for succession, by making a personal donation of rupees forty lacs towards the war fund during the Great War.[2]

RUSSIAN ATTACK ON CHITRAL

Meanwhile important events were fast taking place just across the Pamirs. Within twenty years, following the Crimean War, Czarist

1 Hassan.
2 Hashmatullah.

Russia extended its dominion almost six hundred miles eastward. Chinkent was occupied in 1864, Tashkent in 1865, Khojand in 1866 and Yani Kurgan in 1867. The Khanate of Bokhara was also brought under Russian influence; Samarkand was occupied in 1868 and Khiva in 1873. It was also during these days that Yaqub Beg succeeded in establishing a short-lived independent State comprising Kashgar and Yarkand.

The Russian advance naturally had its repurcussions in London because such close proximity was pregnant with dangerous possibilities for British rule in the sub-continent; as it constituted their most prized possession, any danger to its possession clearly spelled a grave danger for the entire Empire. It may be also pointed out that the absence of a port on warm waters is and has historically been a great geographic handicap for the Russians and some of the wars fought by this country, such as those with Turkey, had the securance of such a port as one of its principal aims. The fact that Russians had an eye on the sub-continent, can be judged from the following summary of an article published in the Russian newspaper, "The Svet" and qouted by the London Times dated 9th December 1892:

> "Adverting the Pamir question, the "Svet" strongly condemns Russian diplomacy for the Convention concluded with Lord Granvilleve in 1872, whereby the Russian frontier in that region was formed by a line from Lake Sari-Kul to Pandja, crossing the Pamirs in such a way as to cut off Russia from access to the Hindu Kush. The newspaper describes this range as the key of Great Britain's Asiatic possessions, and points out that if Russia commanded the passes leading to Chitral, her troops would only have to march some 250 miles along a good route to enter Cashmere; their entry in which country would be the signal for a formidable insurrection against the British throughout India."[1]

So in 1870, a treaty was signed between the Maharaja's Government and the Indian Government providing for permanently posting at Leh of a British Political officer to be known as "Joint Commissioner". The first appointee was Mr. Ramsay of the Political department. Under the terms of the treaty, the officer had exclusive jurisdiction to settle disputes between British subjects and natives on the one hand and those from China and Russia on the other. It was also within his exclusive powers to look after the maintenance of roads and the 'safety' of travellers to Central Asia; the Kashmir Government could henceforth impose no toll or duty on goods exported from British India to Central Asia, passing

1 Knight, p. 293.

through the State territory and vice versa. The British were also empowered to carry out survey operations.

The arrangement enabled the British Government to remain posted with upto date position about the movement of visitors between the two countries and through secret service, watch their contacts. Sometime later, one Dad Mohammad, a native from Quetta and a leading businessman in Leh, having settled there years before, killed an Englishman Mr. Dalgleish on account of some business dispute and escaped to Central Asia. He was pursued by a small contingent headed by Mr. Bower (later General) right into the Chinese territory and arrested. He hanged himself in a Chinese jail.

With the appointment of a Resident, the British Government set up a Political Agency in Gilgit. An officer on special duty had been already working there since early seventies. Col. Durand was appointed Political Resident and with the stationing of a token force at Gilgit, the defence of the territory was taken over by the British Government. During those very days, Prince Ianoff from Soviet Russia led an army of Cossacks across the Korabaut pass on the Pamirs and attacked Chitral; another party under Captain Gromchevtsky descended from the Pamirs into Hunza Valley. Suspicion was naturally engendered in Britain that Russia, by winning over these chieftains, may be planning an invasion.

BRITISH MILITARY ACTIVITY IN THE NORTHERN REGION

It appears that the British Government had, therefore, decided to subjugate Hunza, Nagar, Chillas, Chitral and other small chieftains in the area, who had been able, so far, to maintain their independence despite Dogra attempts to the contrary. This is amply borne out from the fact that Mr. E. F. Knight, the author of that valuable book on Kashmir "Where Three Empires Meet", was specially deputed from London to cover the war at least five to six months before the actual operations started. Surgeon Major George Robertson was appointed Agency Surgeon and two more English officers were appointed as Assistant British Agents. On 1st December, 1891, Col. Durand crossed the frontier at the head of a sizable force and attacked the fort at Chalt. The Colonel was himself injured in the field which, however, remained in his hands. The forces then advanced upon Nagar and thence to Hunza; both were brought under British subjugation. Raja Safdar Ali of Hunza and Raja Azra Khan of Nagar, escaped to Chinese Turkistan where the latter was arrested at Kashgar and sent under guard to Gilgit whence he was transferred to Srinagar where he died after a long internment. Durand then directed his attention towards Chitral. A mission headed by George Robertson and accompanied by a large force was sent there.

Umra Khan, the Khan of Jandol and Dir, whose wife was a sister of the Mehtar, attacked the Mission in aid of his brother-in-law. In the ensuing battle, General Baj Singh, Major Bikram Singh and an English captain were killed alongwith some of their followers. The reinforcement sent from Gilgit was also cut to pieces while still on its way to Chitral. The British Government then despatched two rather formidable armies, one commanded by General Sir Robert Low and the other, by Lt. Col. Kelly. General Sir Robert started from Peshawar while Kelly started from Gilgit. The entire artillery available in the State, was also moved to Chitral. Finding it impossible to meet such a large force, Umra Khan and Sher Afzal withdrew to higher altitudes for their own safety. The campaign was covered by Knight for the London Times and it was because of his reporting, that three persons, Captain Manners Smith, Captain Aylmer and Lt. Boisragon received the most-coveted British award for personal gallantry, the Victoria Cross. Lt. Badcock received the 'Distinguished Services Order' for the capture of Nilt fort in Nagar. Doctor Robertson was later Knighted. Captain Aylmer later rose to be a General. Two interesting events of this campaign may be mentioned here: In 1892, Doctor Robertson went to Chillas at the head of a large 'bodyguard' to negotiate 'peace'. He was customarily received as a diplomat but surprisingly for the Chillasis, who were naturally unprepared, the Doctor and his 'bodyguard' attacked them and taking undue advantage of their unpreparedness, captured the fort. The other incident has also been mentioned by Knight and may be described in his own words; it is an interesting satire on the Dogra army:

> "This incident reminds me of the transport sergeant (British) who was leaving Gilgit not long after the Hunza campaign, and writing the inevitable chits on behalf of the various Aryan brethren who had served in any capacity.
>
> To his surprise a Major-General of the Dogra troops also asked for a certificate, and he responded by writing:
>
>> "I am not accustomed to giving chits to my superior officers, but I must say I have always found General X very affable"."

A few months after the restoration of his powers, came the visit, to the sub-continent, of the then Prince of Wales. The Maharaja left no stone unturned to make his visit to Jammu a memorable success and spent lacs of rupees on the reception. This is what Doctor Arthur Neve has to say about it:—

"A few months later came the visit of our King George, then Prince of Wales, for whom the city was decked in the height of Oriental splendour, and a most beautiful camp was laid out around the new Residency at Satwari. It is estimated that £ 40,000 was spent in connection with this regal display by a State that is always short of money, and which is terribly backward in such important matters as roads and sanitation."[1]

While the Dogras spent so recklessly on the visit of the Prince, their apathy towards the lot of their people may be judged from the fact recorded by Doctor Neve that "the British Resident Col. Parry Nisbet worked out a plan for the supply of pure water to the inhabitants of Srinagar and did his best to get it adopted by the Government but in vain". According to the same author, there was scarcity of food in the Valley in the year 1890; the people having grim memories of the famine which had engulfed them only eleven years back, were in no mood to sit as passive victims and, therefore, resorted to demonstrations; food depots were looted, resulting in some blood-shed at the hands of the Dogra army. A mass movement in the truest political sense, it was led by Munshi Hassan Shah Zirak, a Srinagar lawyer. One day, a procession dispersed quite opposite Shergarhi, the Dogras' summer palace; Muslims performed ablutions on the bank of the river as it was time for prayers. Dogras misinterpreted it as an outrage of the modesty of the Ranis who were living in the palace. Several Muslims, including Zirak, were arrested. Some of them, Zirak included, were tried and sentenced to various terms of imprisonment. However, the Government took proper notice of the popular mood and reduced the price of paddy. Zirak who was thus the first political prisoner in the State in the modern sense of the word, was a talented poet. Referring to his imprisonment and the consequent coming down of the prices, he said:—

زیرک از زیرکی به جیل رسید
نرخ شالی به اصل خویش رسید

Trans: Zirak's 'intelligence' landed him in prison,
But, nevertheless, it did bring down the price of Rice.

In 1890, the Durbar borrowed the services of an experienced British officer Col. Neville Chamberlain as Military Secretary. He reorganised the army with the assistance of scores of British officers. Ram Singh, the Commander-in-Chief, who was used to extensive tours, was met, on

1 Dr. Neve, p. 48.

his visit to Baltistan, by a large crowd of people carrying a number of lights, although it was broad day-light! Intrigued by the spectacle, when Ram Singh asked for an explanation, some one replied, "It is to provide you with light in the benighted land of ours."

The Chillas Muslims again rose in revolt but were suppressed. Their leader Mohammad Esa, described by Neve as "notoriously anti-British," was poisoned to death. According to Hassan, about a thousand persons were arrested, three hundred of whom were tried and sentenced.

The Mulberry tree was protected under the Kashmir State laws. In 1924, in a village in tehsil Pulwama in Kashmir valley, a child removed a branch or two from a tree; Pandit Raja Ram, Watcher, Department of Mulberry Culture, arrested his father who was released after paying 12 seers of Mung as bribe; he was then compelled to carry the Watcher's luggage, to his house which was at a considerable distance. The peasant went for a few miles but being old, was unable to proceed further. The watcher got angry and gave the poor wretch such a merciless beating that as a result of severe head injuries, he died instantaneously.[1]

The Dogras paid scant attention to the education sector. It appears to have been their fixed policy to keep the Muslim masses illiterate so that they could not only be kept out of government service conveniently but also made to take their sufferings and enslavement with a fatalism, characteristic of illiterate masses. In 1891-92, the total number of boys under education in Kashmir valley was 1585 out of whom Muslims were hardly 233. It may be recalled that at that time Muslim population of the Valley numbered 7,97,433.

Certain Muslim organisations in the Punjab, of whom a detailed account will be given in a separate chapter, had already been campaigning through press and platform against the deliberate neglect of Muslims in the field of education. According to Girdlestone, in 1872 there were two schools in Srinagar; one meant for the teaching of Sanskrit to Pandits and the other for teaching Arabic to Muslims. While at the Sanskrit school, a teacher was paid Rs. 60/- per month, the Arabic teacher was paid Rs. 45/- only. It is interesting to point out that although Persian was still the official language, a Persian teacher was paid Rs. 20/- per month. Students in both the schools were given free clothing and food. In addition, the Sanskrit school awarded 12 scholarships, amounting to Rs. 100/- per month.[2]

1 Zamindar, 9th November, 1924.
2 Girdlestone, p. 10.

The first-ever regular census in Srinagar, taken in 1868,[1] showed the following:—

Houses		=	20,304
Shops		=	1,037
Muslims	Male	=	44,356
	Female	=	43,414
Hindus	Male	=	13,292
	Female	=	11,653
	Total:	=	1,12,715

The year 1871 witnessed three devastating fires in the Valley, consuming hundreds of houses.[2]

A spacious building was constructed in Lal Mandi situate opposite Sheikh Bagh across the river on its left bank, then outside the municipal limits of Srinagar. It was used as a Rest House by the Maharaja on his way from Khanabal to Shergarhi, to enable his astrologers to determine the "auspicious moment" for his entry. Later used as a dancing hall, it was subsequently converted into a public library and Museum by Bakhshi Ghulam Mohammad. The prices in 1871 were:—

Mutton (sheep)	=	Re. 1/- per six seers.
Shali, private sale	=	Re. 1/- per kharwar.
Shali, State sale	=	Rs. 1/8/- per kharwar.
Mutton (goat)	=	Rs. 8/- to Rs. 10/- per kharwar.
Cooking oil	=	Re. 1/- to Rs. 1/4/- per 6 seers.[3]

SHARP AND HIS RECOMMENDATIONS

As a result of the agitation conducted by Muslim organisations in India particularly in the Punjab, the Government of India deputed in 19'6 its Educational Commissioner Mr. Sharp for an on-the-spot detailed study of the situation and to make necessary recommendations to the State

1, 2, & 3 *Ibid.*, pp. 18, 20 & 32.

Government. According to his report, the number of primary schools in the entire State was hardly 311 which included 36 aided schools. The number of Arabic teachers was 80. There were only 37 Middle schools while the number of Girls schools was only 16. The amount provided in the budget during that year for grant of scholarships to Muslim students (boys) was Rs. 3,200/- while for girl students (Muslims), it was Rs. 245/-. Mr. Sharp recommended that the number of primary schools should reach at least the level of 1100 within ten years so that every village with a population of at least 500 could have a primary school by 1926, but even in early 1932 the number of such schools was hardly 842 which included 35 aided schools. The State programme provided for the opening of 20 schools a year, which meant 28 years more for reaching a standard that must have been attained, according to Mr. Sharp's recommendations, by 1926. Meanwhile the number of villages with a population of 500 or more had reached 1990, exclusive of 39 towns. It meant that at the pace the Government was moving, 80 years more were needed in the year 1932 before each village with a population of 500 or above and each Mohalla in a town could boast of the existence of a primary school. Mr. Sharp had also recommended employment of at least two-third Arabic teachers i.e. 800 by 1926, but even by 1932 their number had hardly increased by seventeen. In the wake of the Sharp Report, Muslims of India reacted very emphatically against the tyranny and exploitation to which the Kashmiris had been subjected. The matter was raised in the All India Muslim Educational Conference in 1918 and a strong resolution adopted. It was followed by a mission headed by Nawab Sir Mohammad Muzammelullah Khan. It marked the beginning of the massive support of the Muslims of the subcontinent for the cause of Kashmiri Muslims.

A glance at the figures presented to the Glancy Commission shows that in 1932 there were 59 Middle schools which included six aided schools; 32 were in Jammu province where percentage of Hindus in the population was larger as compared to Kashmir valley where their number was only 27. Again, in the same year, the number of Muslim students in the State High schools was 3,663 as compared to 5,683 non-Muslim students. Restrictions had been imposed on the admission of Muslims to Science classes in the S. P. College, Srinagar, the only college in the Valley. These restrictions had been cleverly manipulated. The result was that out of a total number of 145 Science seats, Muslims did not get more than eighteen.

Mr. Sharp had recommended an annual increase of rupees two thousand in the grant for Muslim scholarships. Even this was grossly inadequate as it meant that even at the end of a hundred years the amount

would have been rupees two lacs only. However, even according to his recommendations, it should have been rupees thirty three thousand in 1932 when the question was agitated before the Glancy Commission. The following figures would reveal how this modest recommendation also suffered at the hands of the Dogra government:—

Year	Budget	Amount actually spent
1927-28	Rs. 2,100/-	Rs. 1,103/-
1928-29	Rs. 4,200/-	Rs. 4,072/-
1929-30	Rs. 7,200/-	Rs. 6,486/-
1930-31	Rs. 19,400/-	Rs. 16,321/-

It may be recalled that a gigantic political agitation had set in since 1930 and that is why it was more than doubled in that year though it was still only half of what it should have been, even according to the modest recommendations of Mr. Sharp.

Here another trick was played by the Pandits. The special Muslim scholarships were more attractive than merit scholarships. It was done deliberately so as to attract even such Muslim students who could get merit scholarships. The result was that merit scholarships were exclusively appropriated by the Hindus. It involved a much larger amount. Again, these Muslim scholarships were awarded in the Middle and Primary schools rather than in the High schools and Colleges, so as to discourage higher education among them.

The State also awarded cow-protection scholarships. They were nominally meant for being awarded on merit, irrespective of caste or religion but actually these were never awarded to Muslims. It was also a device adopted to divert public funds towards the benefit of Hindus exclusively. Some funds had also been earmarked annually for scholarships to orphans. In the year 1931, their number was 190. The Muslims received only 42 while the rest numbering 148 went to Hindus. The Sikhs who did not even constitute one percent of the population received Rs. 2,880/- for scholarship while the Rajputs were given a sum of Rs. 4,850/- for the same purpose.

The neglect of female education may be judged from the fact that in 1931-32 there were only two High schools for them. In Kashmir valley

the number of Middle schools was 14 and that of Primary schools 128 only.

The following table will show the discrimination practised in the matter of recruitment to the Educational Service. The table relates to the financial year 1931-32:

Head	Total Number	Muslims Employed
Teachers	2,201	711
Headmasters of High schools	15	1
Headmasters of Middle schools	49	3
Professors in Colleges	33	4
Demonstrators	8	1
Inspecting staff	14	3
Gazetted officers	27	4
Total:	2,347	727

The table shows that in senior appointments, out of 146 posts, Muslims had been recruited in sixteen places only which means a representation of less than eleven percent, although they constituted about 78% of the State's total population.

During the five years ending 1931, scholarships for training in Normal Schools numbered 205 out of which Muslims received 73 while Hindus got 132. Out of 12 officials in the Education Minister's office, not one was a Muslim. According to Mr. Glancy, "it represented a distinctly undesirable condition of affairs". Similarly, in the offices of the Inspectors of Education, the number of Muslims was extremely inadequate.

In 1916, at the time of the visit of Mr. Sharp, there existed a Special Inspector for Mohammadan Education whose job it was to look after the interests of Muslims in the matter of education. The post had been created some years back as a result of strong Muslim agitation both inside and outside the State against the neglect of their education.

After Mr. Sharp's departure, the post was degraded to that of an Assistant Inspector but as found by Mr. Glancy:—

> "it appears that for the last eleven or ten years this official has been deflected from his proper work and has been deputed to discharge the general duties of an ordinary Assistant Inspector in one particular division."

It means that the post was practically abolished as if the purpose for which it was created had been fulfilled. Similarly, funds provided for oriental learning were utilized for the promotion of Sanskrit alone.

Ranbir Singh spent large public funds on the propagation of Sanskrit. A difficult language which has at no stage of known history been the lingua franca of Kashmir, its reading and writing had remained confined, even among Hindus, to the Pandit class, for religious purposes. Ranbir Singh[1] created a rupees 15 lacs' trust for temples to which a further sum of rupees five lacs was added by his will. Most of this money and its income was spent on the propagation of Sanskrit.

Punjabi Hindus enjoyed special favours. Through their influence, the Hindu press used to describe Pratap Singh as "Rajrishi' and the Bhartia Dharam Maha Mandal Banaras conferred upon him the title of "Bharat Dharam Martand", meaning, "the Sun of Hindu religion." Revenue, Police, PWD, Health and Judicial services became the preserves of the nominees of Wazir Lachhman, Dewan Mathra Das of Bhera and Rai Bahadur Baghram of Jullundhur. Forest, PWD, Army and Supply contracts were in the hands of Hindu businessmen domiciled in Jammu.

MUSLIMS KEPT OUT OF SERVICES

The Services are important in any administration, so especially in a country like the Jammu and Kashmir State where no industry was in existence and the Government happened to be the sole employer. The neglect of Muslims in the Services was so alarmingly great that even the Glancy Commission had to concede:—

> "There is no denying the fact that in the matter of State employment, Muslims who formed the great majority of the population, are inadequately represented. The same applies to certain other minor communities."

As regards the proportion of Muslim representation in the Services in

1 William Digby, p. 140.

1932, some of the more glaring instances quoted by the Commission are as follows:—

Department	*Non-Muslims*	*Muslims*
1. **Executive**		
P. W. D.	183	54
Electrical and Mechanical	47	3
Telegraphs and Telephones	73	7
Customs	195	14
S. D. Ms. and Tehsildars	67	22
Girdawars and Patwaris in Mirpur district	131	31
Girdawars and Patwaris in Reasi	85	9
2. **Clerical**		
Finance	368	29
P. W. D.	194	3
Judicial	162	21
3. **Menials**		
P. W. D.	120	23
Customs	314	108
Forest	784	278
Stationery and Printing	66	5

Out of a total of 763 gazetted posts, Muslims held 135 while Hindus held 628 posts. Kashmiri-speaking Muslims held only ten posts.

Despite efforts made by the Glancy Commission, facts and figures with regard to other departments and districts were not placed before it. The Commission, as everybody knew, had to complete its work within a short time because of the continuing and mounting unrest in the State. Undue advantage of this position was taken by the Government in withholding vital information with regard to other departments for the simple reason that the ratio of Muslims was definitely much lower than in the departments enumerated above.

The following tables will further show the almost negligible voice the Muslims had in the State administration:

DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE

S. No.	Office	Muslims	Non-Muslims	Pay
1.	Revenue Minister	—	1	2,500.00
2.	Secretary	1	—	400.00
3.	Assistant Secretary	—	1	380.00
4.	Superintendents	1	2	245.00
5.	Head Clerks	1	8	135.00
6.	Copyists	1	—	23.00
7.	Clerks	4	22	75.00
8.	Jemadars	—	1	23.00
9.	Chaprasis	4	10	14.00
10.	Governors	—	2	1,000.00
11.	Assistant Governors	—	2	350.00
12.	Wazir-e-Wazarat	2	8	400.00
13.	Revenue Assistants	2	2	350.00
14.	Tehsildars	10	28	90.00
	Total:	26	87	5,985.00
				7,18,942.00

Thus in an expenditure of Rs. 7,18,942, the Muslims' share came to about 18% of the total expenditure

DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE

S. No.	Office	Muslims	Non-Muslims	Pay
1.	Accountant General	—	1	28,895.00
2.	Deputy Accountant General	—	1	15,000.00
3.	Assistant Accountant General	—	2	12,000.00
4.	Treasury officers	—	1	12,000.00
5.	Chief Superintendent	—	1	4,800.00
6.	Assistant Account Officers	1	6	33,600.00
7.	Superintendents	1	18	54,720.00
8.	Examiners	1	13	19,950.00
9.	Clerks	10	144	1,38,600.00
	Total:	13	187	3,19,565.00

Thus in an expenditure of Rs. 3,19,565.00, the Muslims' share came to Rs. 18,190/- which means less than 6%.

DEPARTMENT OF CUSTOMS

S. No.	Office	Muslims	Non-Muslims	Pay
1.	Inspector General Customs	—	1	—
2.	Superintendents	—	2	—
3.	Deputy Inspector Class I	—	3	—
4.	Deputy Inspector Class II	1	5	—
5.	Deputy Inspector Class III	—	9	—
6.	Assistant Inspectors	2	21	—
7.	Clerks	—	35	—
8.	Superintendent Excise (Clerks)	16	74	—
	Total:	19	150	

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

S. No.	Office	Muslims	Non-Muslims	Pay
1.	Chief Justice	—	1	—
2.	Judges High Court	1	1	—
3.	Registrar	1	—	—
4.	Deputy Registrar	—	1	—
5.	Session Judges	—	2	—
6.	Additional Session Judges	—	2	—
7.	Additional District Magistrates	—	2	—
8.	Sub-Judges	—	9	—
9.	Munsiffs	1	12	—
10.	Government Advocates	—	1	—
11.	Public Prosecutors	—	2	—
	Total:	3	33	

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

S. No.	Office	Muslims	Non-Muslims	Pay
1.	Chief Medical Officer	—	1	—
2.	Assistant Surgeons	1	9	—
3.	Sub-Assistant Surgeons	5	36	—
4.	Laboratory Assistants	—	2	—
5.	Senior Compounders	—	2	—
6.	Junior Compounders	4	53	—
7.	Female Compounders	—	2	—
8.	Nurses	1	4	—
9.	Male Nurses	12	38	—
10.	Cooks	9	29	—
11.	Medical Specialists	—	1	—
12.	Head Clerks and Clerks	—	6	—
	Total:	32	183	

The annual expenditure on this department amounted to Rs. 2,18,184 out of which the share of Muslims was Rs. 21,012, which is about 11%.

DEPARTMENT OF POLICE

S. No.	Office	Muslims	Non-Muslims	Pay
1.	Inspector General of Police	—	1	—
2.	Deputy Inspector General of Police	1	1	—
3.	Superintendents of Police	1	6	—
4.	Traffic Superintendents	—	1	—
5.	Assistant Superintendents	—	9	—
6.	Inspector Police	—	17	—
7.	Sub Inspector Police	10	40	—
8.	Head Constables	91	143	—
9.	Constables Class I	97	157	—
10.	Ordinary Constables	462	426	—
	Total:	662	801	

The excuse usually advanced by the Government and its apologists for the extremely inadequate representation of Muslims in the Services was the non-availability of educated or qualified Muslims. That it was devoid of force was proved before the Glancy Commission by bringing on record that there were 12 Graduates and 133 Matriculates among Muslims who were unemployed when the Commission began its hearings. Again, what about recruitment to the non-technical services such as those of the menials? At that time no educational qualifications had yet been prescribed for class 4th employees and, invariably, all of them were illiterate. Why was Muslim representation even in these departments less than 25%?

CHAPTER INDEX

POLITICAL AWAKENING

CHAPTER VIII

Political Awakening

THE LABOUR STRIKE

In 1877, a memorandum was secretly submitted to the Viceroy which contained very grave allegations against the Dogra administration. It is not known who the patriots were who presented it nor were its contents ever made public by the Government. Pandit Hargopal Khasta, a Kashmiri Pandit domiciled at Ludhiana and the author of a brief but the first history of Kashmir, in Urdu, was externed from the State on the suspicion of being involved. According to Pandit Bazaz, the memorandum contained allegations of misgovernment and maladministration. One of the allegations also was that boat-loads of starving people were drowned in Wular lake to relieve food shortage. It is not known what, if any, action was taken by the Viceroy but it may have influenced him and his successors in adopting a more active policy towards the State.

A Silk factory, exclusively owned by the Government, had been established in Srinagar during the last years of Ranbir Singh. In 1924, the labourers were paid a daily wage of 4½ annas per head which was obviously too inadequate, especially in view of the rising cost of living and the huge profit it earned. The corruption was so rampant, that even a part of the wages were shamelessly pocketed by the Kashmiri Pandit officials. On persistent demand from the labourers, an inquiry was at last instituted. The allegations of corruption were found to be true but instead of taking action against the guilty, they were mutually transferred from one block of the factory to the other. It happened because the administration was entirely manned by Hindus, who unfortunately considered it a part of their Dharma to protect each other. The failure of the Government to punish the guilty officials especially when the

labourers had exposed themselves to the risk of increased hostility by the factory's Hindu administration, naturally led to great resentment amongst them. The result was that the entire labour force, consisting of thousands, went on a lightening strike but the Government, like every despotic regime, determined to suppress popular resentment, arrested their important leaders among whom was a young, rosy-cheeked, dashing young man, popularly known as King, who had emerged as their undisputed leader and had not only contemptuously resisted attempts to bribe him out of the movement but had also very courageously and with remarkable intelligence, unified the labour and frustrated administration efforts to sow the seeds of discord. The situation was thus aggravated and the strike entered a new phase. This happened in July 1924. In order to register their protest and make a demonstration of their solidarity with their imprisoned comrades, the entire labour force marched in a procession, joined by their women, children and other sympathisers in the city and after covering important parts of the city, halted in front of the Government Hospital. The processionists who were entirely peaceful, were raising slogans demanding the release of their leaders, the punishment of the corrupt officials and a reasonable raise in their wages.

Hari Singh, who was then Commander-in-Chief, rushed to the place with a large force of cavalry and without advance warning to disperse, ordered his troops, armed with fixed bayonets, to charge the strikers. The grim spectacle that must have resulted from this reckless order can be better imagined than described. Scores of people including women and children were trampled under and scores more were wounded by the blood-thirsty soldiers. There was hardly a mohallah where scores of homes did not have someone wounded and almost the entire Muslim sector of the city went without meals that evening because of the depth of feelings and sorrow. It was believed at the time that the action was maliciously resorted to without prior consultations with the Maharaja because the nephew and uncle were not carrying on smoothly and the former was bent upon creating trouble for the latter. It is possible that there was some truth in these rumours. However, the labourers were able to gain a wage increase of six paisa per day, though dozens of their leaders were tried and sentenced to various terms of imprisonment. The illiterate but shapely-built King was tried for treason and rioting and so tortured and underfed in jail that years later when he was released, he was a shadow of the familiar King and had contacted T.B. which ultimately silenced him for ever.

Another serious incident which took place in the same year and again in Srinagar, related to the taking out of a Tazia. It appears that

the Shias altered the traditional route of the procession whereupon Ram Singh, Superintendent of Police carried away the Tazia under orders of the Governor, thus denying them the right to observe a highly-emotional religious function. The action was taken, perhaps, to prevent a likely Shia-Sunni clash but it was condemned by all sections of Muslims; the most prominent who sent in his protest was Khawaja Saad-ud-Din Shawl. A businessman by profession, he is credited with great political foresight and rightly deserves the honour of being treated as father of the modern political movement in Jammu and Kashmir. Agha Haider, an Advocate from Lucknow, later a Judge of the Lahore High Court, who was on a visit to Srinagar, was staying in a house-boat at Nasim Bagh. Perhaps he felt interested in the happenings and is stated to have helped in drafting a petition of protest. This is how Shawl came in contact with him.

A few weeks earlier, a group of Pandits, instigated by an article published in the Hindu newspaper 'Akhbar-i-Am' Lahore, attempted to take, by force, possession of Khanqah-e-Mualla, Srinagar, one of the most sacred Muslim religious shrines in Kashmir. They trespassed into the Khanqah without taking off their shoes, by itself a sacrilege, broke some of its windows and when pushed out by the Muslims already present, hurled stones and brickbats, causing some damage to the architecturally unique historical monument. Similar incidents were repeated in the towns of Islamabad and Baramula where efforts were made to take forcible possession of places of Muslim worship.

MEMORANDUM TO LORD READING

It was at this time that news of the impending visit of Lord Reading, the Viceroy, became locally known. By this time Muslims had become convinced that they will not be able to get justice at the hands of their rulers. They had already witnessed three Dogra rulers, one after the other, and had tasted their bitter rule now for a period of nearly eighty years; their condition had simply worsened, while that of the people living in British India had undoubtedly improved. They also realised that so long as the British Government or its representatives at Delhi did not get sincerely interested in their lot, they could expect no improvement. Therefore, in a few secret meetings held in Srinagar and attended by some of the leading members of the community, it was decided to present a memorandum to the Viceroy while he was in the city. The prime mover, of course, was Khawaja Saad-ud-Din Shawl, who persuaded many a hesitant friends that it was time to take a resolute public stand in vindication of the rights of their people. Mr. Agha Haider was engaged to draft the memorandum. Lord Reading arrived in Srinagar on 14th October and returned back on 28th October. Exact date of the presentation of the Memorandum is

not recorded anywhere but it is said that it was presented when he visited a shop to see the local handicrafts. The Memorandum contained the following demands :

1. Proprietary rights in land should be granted to the tenants, as these had been forcibly snatched away from them.

2. Muslim representation in the State Council should be according to their ratio in the population.

3. In order to give Muslims effective representation in the Services, all future vacancies be made available to them and in case Muslims with requisite qualifications were not locally available, Muslims from outside Kashmir, be appointed till such time as the local talent was available.

4. To weed out corruption from Services which had exceeded all limits, an impartial tribunal be appointed to inquire into these complaints and award punishment.

5. Since agriculture was the principal occupation of the people, the Governor of Kashmir valley should be a Muslim and if Muslims of requisite qualifications are not available, some Englishman may be appointed to the post. Similarly Muslims should be appointed to important posts such as the Superintendent of Police, the Assistant Superintendent of Police, Superintendent Customs, etc.

6. The cases registered against labourers of the Silk Factory be made over for trial to a tribunal which should consist of at least two law-knowing and impartial Judges, one of whom must be a European.

7. Since the entire labour force of the Silk Factory consists of Muslims, it is essential that the latter be appointed to higher administrative posts in the factory.

8. The Department of Shali (rice) should be liquidated and the restrictions, imposed on the import of foodgrains from outside the State, be removed. In order to reduce the burden on the peasants who had to pay the revenue in the form of Shali, food rationing in Srinagar be restricted to poor people only.

9. A Muslim or European expert on education be appointed to look after Muslim education. Compulsory free primary education be introduced and the same be initiated from Srinagar city. Muslims be recruited both as teachers and Inspectors in

greater numbers and sufficient number of scholarship be made available to them for higher education in India and abroad.

10. Free forced labour should be completely abolished and replaced by contractual labour.

11. The lands that had been forcibly and illegally seized from Muslims and awarded to non-Muslims, should be restored to their respective owners.

12. An elected Legislative Assembly which should also work as a Constituent Assembly for the drafting of a Constitution for the State, be set up immediately. Muslim population must be kept in view while granting representation to the various communities.

13. The Government contracts, particularly those relating to forests, roads and construction, should be granted to State nationals in general and to Muslims in particular.

14. The Mosques and other religious properties which are in possession of the Government be immediately restored and steps be taken to ensure that Muslim religious places and graveyards remain protected from future encroachment by non-Muslims.

15. A cess of six pies per rupee charged with the land revenue from Muslims for the repairs of Jamia Masjid Srinagar be made permanent provided half of it is spent on the repairs of other historical shrines and the other half on the advancement of their education; provided further, a Board consisting of Muslims is constituted to administer the fund.

16. A Commission composed of impartial European officers be appointed to inquire into Muslim grievances regarding the Zuljinnah procession, the incident at Khanqah-e-Shah-i-Hamdan and those relating to Islamabad and Baramula.

17. Since the rights of Muslims are insecure and are trampled under by the local authorities, the Resident of Kashmir be made answerable for their plight.

Attached with the memorandum was a statement prepared on the basis of the Civil list showing the extreme inadequacy of Muslim representation in the Services. According to the statement, the number of non-Muslim gazetted officers in Kashmir valley was 421, who drew, as pay, a sum of Rs. 16,50,114, while the number of Muslim gazetted officers was hardly 55 whose pay amounted to Rs. 1,47,852/-. The memorandum

also stated that while the expenditure on the Private department of the Maharaja was rupees fourteen lacs, that on the Private department of Hari Singh, the Commander-in-Chief, was rupees sixteen lacs. It quoted facts and figures to show that expenditure amounting to rupees 50,75,114 was almost entirely appropriated by the Hindus.

The memorandum was signed by Khawaja Saad-ud-Din Shawl, Khawaja Hassan Shah Naqshbandi, Mir Waiz Kashmir, Maulvi Ahmadullah, Mir Waiz Hamdani, Agha Syed Hussain Shah Jalali, Mufti Sharif-ud-Din and Khawaja Hassan Shah Mahandi etc.

Lord Reading was accompanied by his wife Alice, the Marchioness of Reading. India Office Library London has preserved her letters which include two written from Kashmir. This writer was not able to trace anything of any importance from their perusal except that they were in Kashmir in October, 1924.

Lord Reading forwarded the memorandum to Maharaja Pratap Singh for necessary action but it appears that he may have been privately advised to get the grievances investigated. This was generally the pattern practised by the British in relation to the Princes, particularly after the rise of militant nationalism in the subcontinent. The Maharaja, thereupon, appointed a three-member Committee consisting of Rai Bahadur Col. Janak Singh, a close relative, Chaudhri Khushi Mohammad Nazir, Revenue Minister and Mr. Glancy, the State Minister for Finance and Police. Mr. Glancy had already earned the reputation of not being well disposed of towards Muslims; he was also a close friend of Hari Singh; Chaudhri Khushi Mohammad Nazir hailed from Punjab and is remembered to this day for being more loyal than the King himself. The Government even resorted to blackmail to secure a repudiation of the memorandum by its signatories, among whom, Shawl, Hassan Shah and Jalali took complete responsibility for it and desired to lead evidence in support of their allegations, but no evidence was allowed and one fine morning it was learnt that the Commission had exonerated the Dogra Government and dismissed the charges as unproved and untrue. On 15th March, 1925, an Inspector of Police, accompanied by two Sub-Inspectors and a hundred and fifty constables, surrounded the house of Saad-ud-Din Shawl. His only son lay seriously ill but unmindful of the imperative necessity of his remaining at home, he was shown an order of banishment, placed in a closed police lorry, taken to Kohala and dropped in the British territory. Khawaja Hassan Shah Naqshbandi lost his jagir which fetched rupees four thousand a year. His son Khawaja Noor Shah (Tehsildar)

was compelled to proceed on forced leave and then treating his written protest as resignation, was retired from service. Hassan Shah Jalali was dismissed from the office of Zaildar. The other signatories were administered warnings. It appears that the document was typed only a day before its presentation, in the house-boat of M. Agna Haider; the type-writer was provided by Khawaja Mohammad Maqbool Pandit, then Head clerk in the office of the Revenue Minister. He also seems to have been associated with its drafting. When the signatories learnt of the possibility of a police raid on Agha Haider's house-boat, they approached Pir Mohammad Maqbool Gilani, the Sajada Nasheen of the Khanqah of Pir Dastgir at Khanyar, Srinagar for help because all boatmen in Kashmir acknowledge him as their patron Saint. Fortunately for them, Mr. Agha Haider was not present and Pir Maqbool was able not only to retrieve the type-writer but also whatever relevant papers were found in the house-boat. The same were immediately burnt and the ashes dissolved in the river. In a few days the police was able to trace the house-boat as origin of the Memorandum but by now the boatmen were already aware of the implications and claimed theft of the papers on the preceding night.

The exile of Khawaja Saad-ud-Din Shawl or the retirement of Khawaja Noor Shah did in no way help the authorities because while the latter utilised his time in the despatch of important news to contacts in the Punjab, the former spent his forced stay abroad in building up a slow but steady movement from outside the State for reforms in Kashmir. Meetings were held at several places, particularly, Lahore, Jalalpur Jattan, Sialkot, Rangpur, Gujranwala, Wazirabad, Lyallpur, Karrianwalla, Sangla, Simla, Amritsar and Daska condemning the repressive policy of the Dogras and calling upon the British Government to intervene and safeguard the rights of the Muslim citizens of the State; the first meeting at Lahore was held on 26th April, 1925, and was addressed by late Syed Mohsin Shah, Advocate.[1] With the exile of Shawl, the unrest gained momentum. Srinagar was handed over to the army, but it appeared that its fear was on the wane.

PRATAP SINGH PASSES AWAY

During the Great War, the Maharaja placed all his resources at the disposal of the British Government in the hope of gaining restoration of all his powers. On 18th September, 1920, pleading his war services, he requested the Viceroy for restoration of his powers. Consequently in March, 1921, after securing an undertaking that he would be bound to consult the Resident on all important matters pertaining to the frontiers and certain administrative measures, Lord Chelmsford

1 Fugan-e-Kashmir, 1926.

in a Durbar held at Jammu restored him to all his powers. He then appointed an Executive Council of five members with himself as President and Raja Hari Singh, as its senior member. Mr. Wakefield, an officer of the Political department, who was then in Hyderabad, was appointed Chief Secretary on the advice of Hari Singh with whom he had developed friendly relations. According to Mr. Wakefield, Pratap Singh who had met twenty-six Viceroys, was very prone to be influenced in the matter of personalities and whenever there was trouble in the Council, it was always over some personality and not over any matter of policy or administration.[1] Mr. Wakefield also records that the Maharaja had a habit of pretending to fall asleep if any subject distasteful to him came up for discussion. That Pratap Singh and Hari Singh were not on good terms is also borne out from his following observations:

"There were frequent clashes between the Maharaja and his strong minded nephew and heir. As soon as a clash occurred, Hari Singh used to become deathly silent. He would scribble on a piece of paper, 'I have a headache, I must go' or some such sentence, and rolling the paper into a ball, would push it across the table to me. I used to open and read such messages and quietly put them into my pocket.

The old Maharaja watched these proceedings very carefully and realised that there was something wrong and sometimes that realisation made him more amenable."[2]

The Maharaja fell ill in 1925 and was removed to Srinagar where he died on 23rd December, 1925. It would be of interest again to quote Mr. Wakefield who was present on the occasion :

"The old Maharaja was on his death-bed in a room upstairs in the palace, but was rushed down to die on Mother Earth which is essential for Hindus. A thread connected him with a cow outside and ensured the safe passage of his soul to Heaven. The priests had a good time when he lay dying. Five thousand rupees produced a goddess in gold with promises of longevity. The palace gates were guarded and General Janak Singh, the Army Minister, arrested the statue of the goddess and found it was not even gold.

A very interesting ceremony was performed after the Maharaja's death. A Brahmin was brought in from outside the State and shaved from head to foot. He was presented with samples of all the articles which had been used by the late Maharaja, money, motor-car, a horse, kitchen utensils in gold and silver, beds and bed linen, etc. etc., and turned out of the State under police escort, never to return under pain of death.

1&2 Wakefield, p. 179 &180.

He took away all the sins of the departed potentate."

The Maharaja would not see any Muslim before noon as he considered such a sight or meeting, an ill-omen. During his last days, Hakim Mahmud Khan was summoned from Delhi for treatment. On the very first morning when he went to see him, the Maharaja declined to allow him in and required him to come at noon.

According to Mohammad Shah, Pratap Singh sent a sum of Rs. 15,00,000/- to Lord Curzon, as a donation, for the setting up of a memorial for Queen Victoria.[1] During the Great War, 1914—18, the State Government contributed a sum of rupees one crore twelve lacs towards the war fund. Pratap Singh made a personal donation of fifteen lacs. In addition, a sum of rupees seventy-five lacs was advanced as loan. Pratap Singh also donated rupees 3½ lacs for the setting up of the Banaras Hindu University. Hari Singh made a personal donation of rupees fifty thousand. In all, the University collected a sum of rupees 5½ lacs from the State.

Pratap Singh was succeeded by his nephew Hari Singh. Born in 1895, the British Government took keen interest in his education and upbringing. Major H. K. Barr was appointed his guardian; he held this post till the prince attained majority in 1918. During his absence on leave, the duties were entrusted to another British officer, Captain Burge. He entered the Mayo College Ajmere (an exclusively Princes' institution) in 1908 and after completing his studies there, received training in the Imperial Cadet College Dehra Dun. He was appointed Commander-in-Chief in 1915. During the Great War, the State army units saw active service in Palestine, France and East Africa. According to Mr. Bamzai, Hari Singh made a personal donation of rupees 43,00,000 towards the War fund.

Hari Singh took four wives.[2] His first wife was a Raj Kumari from Ramkot. She died in pregnancy under mysterious circumstances. It was rumoured that Pratap Singh was responsible for her death as he wanted to eliminate the chance of the birth of a son to Hari Singh. His second wife was a princess from Chamba, and the third one, a Raj Kumari from Bharatpur in Kathiawar. A sum of rupees eleven lacs was spent on the third marriage. His fourth and last wife was a Katoch princess from Kangra, Tara Devi.

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1 Hassan, p.654.
2 Sh. Mohammad Salim.

HARI SINGH—EARLY RULE

Hari Singh was different from his three predecessors in certain respects; for instance he alone had received not only a better but also what we term as the western education, and he alone amongst them had taken to a western way of living, with all its good or bad aspects. He was the first to have learnt Kashmiri. He abolished purdah in his dynasty; Tara Devi was the first Maharani to appear in public without purdah. Given to a life of luxury and vice, it landed him in trouble on several occasions. In 1918, while in England, he spent so lavishly as perhaps no prince from India had done before. He was staying in Douglas Castle in Scotland, and his wealth had acquired such a notoriety that there were even attempts to rob him at gun point. In one instance, when he visited Holdorn Stadium to witness a wrestling bout between Beckett, the English heavy-weight and Carpentier, the Frenchman, a London policeman gave a typed sheet from Scotland Yard to Mr. Wakefield just before the fight had commenced, warning him that an attempt may be made to rob Hari Singh while leaving the stadium but at the same time assuring him that all precautionary measures had been already taken in hand. When the fight was over, Hari Singh was given cover by a double row of policemen until he entered his car which had been specially brought up near the stadium; a Police Inspector took the seat by the chauffeur and drove with them for about a mile.[1]

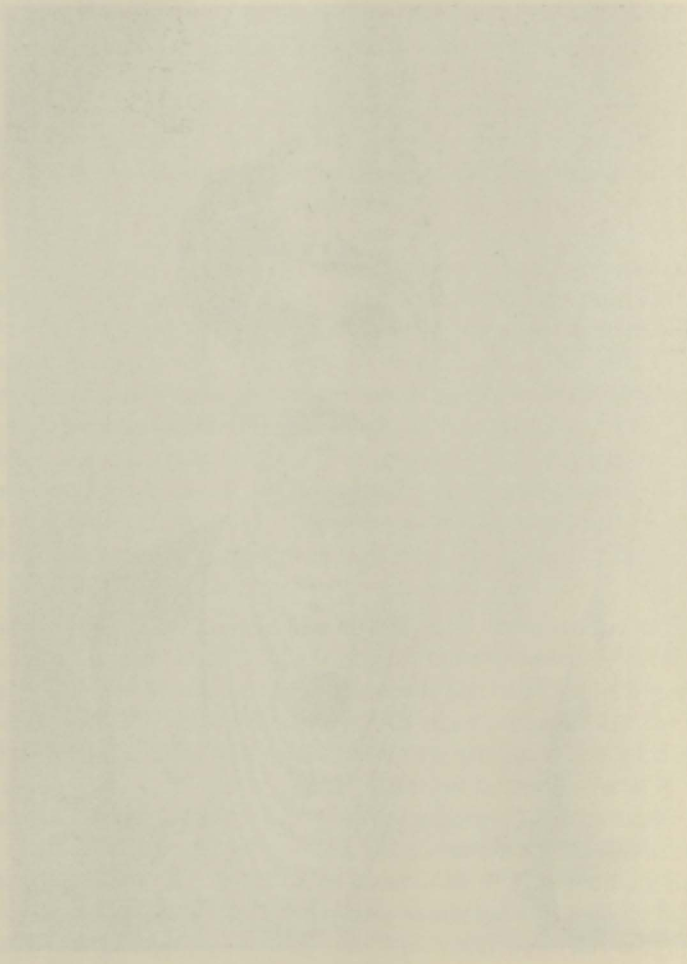
The next incident took place in 1921 and is notorious the world over as the case of Mr."A". According to Lord Birdwood,[2] Hari Singh was "the victim of an unscrupulous attempt at blackmail in the big way and for a few days in 1921 the case of Mr. "A" was to monopolise the head-lines of certain British newspapers". The first time it found a brief mention in a book was by the famous John Gunther in 'Inside Asia". In this case a woman of easy virtues was used by a gang of blackmailers in the British channel to secure a cheque for a sum of £ 1,50,000 from him and when the case went to a British Court, Sir John Simons, who later headed the Simon Commission to the sub-continent and who is regarded as perhaps the greatest lawyer of his age, described Hari Singh, in his address to the Court, as a "poor wretch".

The western education, however, had, it must be said to his credit, given him a better sense of public duty and it seemed for a while

1 Recollections, p. 172.
2 Birdwood, p. 31.



MAHARAJA HARI SINGH



that he might succeed where others had failed, in cultivating the support of his people through a policy of good government. Unfortunately his coronation shocked the people to some extent because money from public exchequer was squandered away in a manner and on a scale unprecedented in the history of princely States, so much so that the Maharaja's favourite horse 'Zabardast' was, according to Mr. Wakefield, decked out with emeralds worth rupees seven lacs. An American cinema operator Mr. Cowling was engaged to make a film. It was estimated that the coronation expenses may have in no case been below rupees twenty-five to thirty lacs. That such a huge amount should have been spent on celebrating his accession to the throne in a land where the great majority of people did not enjoy even one meal a day, was undoubtedly a poor demonstration of his being well-intentioned.

However, during early years of his rule, certain measures were taken which had considerable impact on the people and did improve his image in the country. One of these measures was the enactment of the Agriculturists Relief Regulation. The Maharaja was on a tour of Uri and the Act was drafted there. The background story is best told by Mr. Wakefield, who was by then senior Minister in the Council:

> "We went into camp at Uri. After inspecting offices all day I returned in the evening to find H.H. sitting outside the Rest House receiving petitions.
>
> He said he had received about 1,000 petitions and all were against an iniquitous system of usury and he asked me to explain.
>
> I had come across a case of it in the Tehsil and told him that a cultivator had borrowed 12 annas to buy medicine for his sick father. That was three years ago and now a decree had been given against him for one hundred and eighteen rupees.
>
> He was very angry and telegraphed for the Council and Mr. Middleton, the Settlement Commissioner. They all arrived and Middleton confirmed the universal prevalence of this iniquitous system of the usury.
>
> We sat for three days and nights and thrashed out the Agriculturists Relief Regulation, under which a debtor could apply to a Court for examination of his account in his creditors' books, and if it was found that excessive interest had been charged, the Court

could cut down the total amount and give the debtor a decree against his creditor.

Pandits were usually the creditors and this hit them very hard and led to even greater hatred between the Pandit and Muslim populace than already existed owing to the Pandits having monopolised office and power."[1]

Primary education for boys in the cities of Srinagar and Jammu was made compulsory and the Sharda Act passed by the Indian Legislature penalising the marriages between boys and girls before attaining the age of 18 and 14 years respectively was also enforced. The 'State Subject' term was redefined. It may be recalled here that in the beginning, land grants were made freely to persons from outside the State. With the growth of an educated class, particularly outside the Dogras, an agitation gained momentum requiring the Government to confine the State employment to hereditary State subjects alone. The term was first defined in 1912 but in 1927 it received a much wider and beneficial definition. The State nationals were divided into three categories and even if they left the State or had already done so, they were to be treated as State subjects for two generations of the same class to which their ancestor was entitled to. It had two main advantages for the State nationals; the first one was that in all future appointments, the entry of non-State nationals became difficult although it were the Kashmiri Pandits and the Mahajans who benefited the most from the said order, partly because they were far advanced in education but mainly because they were already fairly well entrenched in the administration; the advantage gained by the Muslims in Kashmir valley was that the transfer of lands by the poor peasantry into the hands of money-lenders and Mahajans from outside the State, which had assumed alarming proportions, was halted. It is only fair to be recorded to the credit of Maharaja Hari Singh that most of the lands in Kashmir valley would have been otherwise sold away by the poor Muslim peasantry to the money-lenders and in any case, they would have acquired these by bringing about their court-sales in execution of money decrees. Hari Singh also abolished prostitution.

In his coronation speech, Hari Singh declared, it appears on the advice of Mr. Wakefield, "I am a Hindu but as a ruler over my people, my only religion is Justice". Once or twice he even joined Muslims in their Eid prayers. In 1928, due to heavy rains, Srinagar city was heavily flooded; when the waters reached the embankment level of Jhelum, known as 'Bund', he is reported to have been the first to arrive on the scene.

1 Recollections, p.

We have it on the authority of Wakefield that during the early years of his reign, Hari Singh's dislike of flattery almost bordered on hatred. To discourage it and expose the sycophants, he instituted an order known as "Khushamadi Tatto" Ist class in silver and 2nd class in bronze, depicted in a statue showing a pony sitting up and begging. The order was annually bestowed, in a solemn but restricted Durbar, on every confirmed flatterer.[1]

There were some jewels in the treasury. Seven sapphire jewels from the time of Ranbir Singh and perhaps extracted from the northern region mines, were valued at rupees ten lacs by an American Jeweller then touring India. Hari Singh put them in a necklace decorating his turban.[2] The Dogras had a fabulous hoard of jewellery. Some were plundered from a former Queen of Delhi who lived in Jammu in a building known as Begum Haveli, which now houses Jammu Station of the All India Radio, and Rani Chand Kaur, while others were looted from the Sikh treasury by Gulab Singh. According to a modest estimate, jewellery worth rupees 220 million was removed from Kashmir when Hari Singh fled away in 1947.[3] His golden throne weighing 9 maunds was presented to the Government of India by Bakhshi Ghulam Mohammad. In the first instance, due to the opposition of Karan Singh who claimed it as family property, New Delhi hesitated out of regards for the sentiments of the Dogra community but a few years later when stringent measures were taken against hoarding of the metal, Bakhshi again offered it as a gift to the economically-tight Central Government. This time it was not only gratefully accepted but Mr. Murarji Desai, the then Finance Minister, specially flew to Srinagar to receive it.

It was very unfortunate both for him as well as for his people, that such just measures and noble conduct on his part should have been short-lived and that he should have within a few years transformed himself into an ease-loving and pleasure-seeking despot. Even a partisan like Mr. Bamzai has to concede:

> "Very often he came under the influence of advisers and court favourites who were neither intelligent nor had the good of the State and its people at heart. Unlike his predecessors, Maharaja Hari Singh lived in, so to say, an ivory tower surrounded by his few favourites having no personal contact with the people, who through centuries of suppression and misrule were groaning under the burden of heavy taxation, poverty and want. The Maharaja, ignorant of the

1 Wakefield, p. 199.
2 *Ibid*, p. 198.
3 Review Notes by Sahibzada Hassan Shah.

forces that were rising at his feet, indulged in cheap pleasures of life and spent most of his time outside the State. The apparent calm and docility of the people lulled him to a false sense of security."[1]

BANNERJI SPOTLIGHTS ATTENTION

The first measure introduced by him which naturally annoyed the Muslims was the setting up of a Military School in Jammu on the pattern of the King George Military School Serai Alamgir. Named Sri Pratap Military School, it was to impart military training, annually, to fifty students. The admission was restricted to Rajputs, who formed a small minority. Even among Rajputs, discrimination was exercised against Muslim Rajputs and it was seldom that any one from amongst them was admitted. It was something that even his predecessors had not attempted to do and that also at a time when means of communication were almost non-existent, education was confined to a limited section and the western concept of the freedom of press, platform and expression had not as yet taken roots in British India. The people were therefore, naturally enraged particularly the Muslims because Kashmiri Pandits and Mahajans did not care for recruitment in the army and felt content with remaining in control of the civil administration.

Yet another provocation was the appointment of semi-literate Dogras as Heads of important departments. Neither did at the time exist a Public Service Commission nor was any competitive examination held for entry into Services. The appointments were, as in the medieval times, the prerogative of the ruler and no one had the right or the opportunity to question it. Another aspect of his administration that caused resentment was the enormous increase in the budget allocations for his privy purse.

Although a highly unsatisfactory Press Act was already in force since 1971 Bikrami, no newspaper except 'Ranbir Weekly' run by the Dogras and founded in the name of Ranbir Singh, was allowed to be published. The attitude of the Government towards the publication of newspapers may be judged from the following incident: The Christians had set up in Leh a mission known as "The Moravian Mission". It started publication of a news-letter in 1903 which was edited by Rev. J. E. Peter and contained news about the activities of the Mission. Published in Bodhi on a Lithu press and priced one pice per copy, its total circulation did not exceed 150. Its range of distribution hardly covered Ladakh, Lahoul, Bushair and Darjeeling. As no formal sanction had been obtained for its publication, it did not attract the attention of the Government. Three years later, when it came to the notice of the Resident, he

1 Bamzai, p.

brought it to the notice of the Maharaja, who promptly stopped its publication. In a communication addressed to the Chief Minister, the Maharaja wrote:—

> "The reasons why publication of newspapers and journals has hitherto never been considered desirable to be allowed, are better known to the Chief Minister than being described by me here."[1]

Even cultural or religious magazines were not allowed. While refusing permission for the publication of such a magazine, the Judicial Minister informed the applicant that in his opinion "it was difficult to disconnect politics from questions which have a bearing on the social, moral or educational conditions of a community". Mr. Bamzai relates the interesting instance of one Damodar Singh, an Electrical Engineer, who had studied for more than a year in the United States and used to get the Strand Magazine, a harmless journal, dedicated to fiction. He was suspected of being a 'seditionist' because it had come to the knowledge of the Maharaja that he was importing "newspapers that are considered seditious in India and takes interest in such papers". The accused pleaded guilty, sarcastically remarking that it was in America that he acquired the "reading habit".[1]

The ban on the formation of societies or associations even for social or religious purposes was rigid. Even in 1921, the Maharaja was very reluctant to grant permission for the formation of a society dedicated solely to the teaching of the Holy Quran. While granting permission, the police was ordered "to watch that the Anjuman does not take part in political matters". The Central Dogra Sabha Jammu and Amar Rajput Khashtriya Sabha were pronouncedly loyalist political organisations. The Dogra Sabha had Muslim members as well such as Mian Ahmed Yar Khan, Advocate. After the founding of the Anjuman-e-Himayat-e-Islam Lahore, similar educational and charitable societies sprang up all over India. Permission was, ultimatiely, granted for the setting up of the Anjuman-e-Nusrat-ul-Islam under Mir Waiz Rasul Shah in Kashmir and Anjuman-e-Islamia under General Farman Ali, with Lala Hans Raj Dogra pleader as Secretary, in Jammu. Similarly, the Arya Samaj, both the Gurukal Section of Swami Shardhanand and the College Section of Hans Raj had been also allowed to function. The Government took every step it possibly could conceive, to stop the wave of political awakening that had engulfed the sub-continent in the shape of the Khilafat and Non-cooperation Movements from reaching the ears of the people of the State. Even long before this, visitors were closely watched lest they communicate the rising tide of

1 Bamzai, p. 651.

freedom in British India and on the slightest suspicion, were they turned out of the State. In 1909 the Resident informed the Government that two agitators from Punjab were about to enter the State and a watch be kept over them. The Maharaja, in his enthusiasm, replied that there was no need to arrange for a watch because he would not permit them entry[1]. As Bengal then was seething with revolt and most of the revolutionaries hailed from there, every Bengali was a suspect. Mr. Bamzai has recorded an instance from official records: A Bengali youth who came to Jammu in 1910 to stay with his uncle, a lecturer in a State college, was banished although the latter had undertaken to be personally responsible for his good conduct.

It appears, however, that the growing unrest was coming to the surface and secret meetings were being held to organise a political movement because, as early as 1914, the Government enforced the Prevention of Seditious Meetings Act, seeking to prevent "the holding of public meetings, likely to promote sedition or to cause a disturbance of public tranquillity". The Act defined public meeting as "a meeting which is open to the public or to any class or portion of the public, notwithstanding that it is held in a private place and notwithstanding that admission thereto may have been restricted by ticket or otherwise". Section 3 of the Act is reproduced below:

> "No public meeting for the furtherance or discussion of any subject likely to cause disturbance or public excitement or for the exhibition or distribution of any writing or printed matter relating to any such subject shall be held:—
>
> (*a*) unless written notice of the intention to hold such meeting and of the time and place of such meeting has been given to the Governor (or Sub-Divisional Magistrate) or the Superintendent of Police at least three days previously; and
>
> (*b*) unless permission to hold such meeting has been obtained in writing from the Governor (or Sub-Divisional Magistrate) or the Superintendent of Police.
>
> 2. Any Magistrate of the Ist Class or a Police Officer not below the rank of an Inspector may, by order in writing, depute one or more Police Officers not being below the rank of Sergeants, or other persons to attend any such meeting for the purpose of causing a report to be taken of the proceedings."[2]

1 *Ibid*, p.
2 J & K. Laws VI, p. 292.

The executive was even empowered to prohibit any meeting of which permission may have been granted and violation of the Act or the orders made thereunder was made punishable with imprisonment for a term extending to six months or with fine or with both. It also appears that recruitment to the army and the police services on the lowest level from areas traditionally providing such personnel, fell short of requirements, due to a campaign by some sections of the people against enlistment. Consequently the Government issued a Notification in 1917 making persons "who dissuade or attempt to dissuade any person from entering the military service of His Majesty or the military or police service of the State Government or any one who abetted or even attempted to abet such an act", punishable with imprisonment for a term extending to three years or with fine or with both.

This is how we enter the year 1929. Sir Aibion Bannerji, a Bengali Christian civil servant of the Government of India was senior Minister of the Executive Council of the State. He tried to lift the administration from its abysmal morass and suggested measures to improve the sad lot of the people. It is commonly believed that he had also desired the liberalisation of laws relating to the freedom of press, speech and association but these are the very things that raise suspicion in the minds of despotic rulers. So he had no alternative as a man of honour but to tender his resignation which he did on 15th March, 1929. On arrival in Lahore, he was contacted by representatives of the Press, who wanted to know the causes of his resignation because it was unprecedented in the history of Princely States. Sir Bannerji could not suppress the truth with regard to the situation as it prevailed inside the State and had to unveil some of its darker aspects. The statement was published in the Daily Tribune Lahore on 19th March 1929. Only part of it is available in its original English language, therefore, the remainder has been translated from Urdu. Sir Bannerji said:—

> "Jammu and Kashmir State is labouring under many disadvantages, with a large Muhammaden population absolutely illiterate, labouring under poverty and very low economic conditions of living in the villages and practically governed like dumb driven cattle. There is no touch between the Government and the people, no suitable opportunity for representing grievances and the administrative machinery itself requires overhauling from top to bottom to bring it up to the modern conditions of efficiency. It has at present little or no sympathy with the people's wants and grievances.
>
> There is hardly any public opinion in the State. As regards the Press, it is practically non-existent with the result that the Govern-

ment is not benefited to the extent that it should be by the impact of healthy criticism."

"Situated as it is on the point where three empires meet, the State occupies an important position of extraordinary dimensions for India. But it cannot prosper by taking advantage of the vast potentials, nature has bestowed on it unless there is adequate cooperation between the ruler and the ruled and unless the British Government sympathetically considers legitimate demands of the people and secures internal autonomy for them as enjoyed by States of smaller status and meagre finances.

The appalling economic condition of the people is responsible for all the evils prevailing in the State and although some effective measures by His Highness's Government did have a salutary effect, yet the objective cannot be achieved so long as the general economic condition does not improve.

In rural areas the economic condition of the people is as bad as it could be. The Kashmiri artisan is known the world over for his skill and art. But their industry has for sometime been on the decline and the Government must do something to support them as is done in Mysore State.

I have found the people very responsible and prudent, though they are very backward."

To illustrate the appalling poverty of Muslims, he cited the instance of a Srinagar carpenter who had applied for a passport to go to such a far off place as Fiji Island in search of employment.

READING ROOM PARTY SRINAGAR AND YOUNG MENS' MUSLIM ASSOCIATION JAMMU

It was in this background and at this stage that two important and epoch-making figures, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah and Chaudhri Ghulam Abbas appeared on the scene. The sixth son of Sheikh Mohammad Ibrahim, a pashmina merchant, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah was born in village Saura on 15th December, 1905, his father having pre-deceased his birth by fifteen days. Village Saura is at a distance of about five miles from Srinagar towards the north and is situated on the shores of the famous Anchar lake on the road to Gandarbal. He passed his Matriculation in 1922 from the State High School, Fateh Kadal, and it was with great difficulty and after several meetings with the Education Minister

that he secured admission in the Sri Pratap College Srinagar, the only college then in the whole of Kashmir province. After passing his F.Sc. in 1924, he sought admission in the B.Sc. class in the Prince of Wales College, Jammu, because Science had not been introduced at degree-level in Srinagar. It was refused on the ground that the seats had been already allocated. Actually one seat was still vacant which was later given to the son of an officer though not a State national. Therefore, he took admission in the Islamia College, Lahore. After graduation, he went to Aligarh in 1928 and after passing his M.Sc./Physics, returned to Srinagar in April 1930. He was the first Muslim in the State with a Masters degree in Science. The difficulty experienced by him at the hands of Hindu officials in getting admission to the S. P. College, the denial of a seat at Jammu and the preference given to a non-State subject had quite naturally generated bitterness and sowed the seeds of rebellion in his youthful mind. He was in Lahore for three years and it was perhaps the way Fate was unfolding its plan of building him up into his present position that he failed to get admission in Jammu.

When he reached Lahore, it was in the aftermath of the Khilafat and the Non-co-operation Movements wherein lacs of Muslims had suffered imprisonment, privations, confiscation of property, migration to Afghanistan and even death. The chances of the sub-continent gaining freedom had brightened but it had, at the same time, deepened the Hindu-Muslim hostility that was as old as the rise of Islam in the sub-continent. The fear of the brute Hindu majority rule in any democratic set up in a free India loomed large on the Muslim minds and it was quite apparent and needed no argument, in view of the Hindus' overwhelming majority, their historical and traditional hatred against Muslims, their exclusiveness and the resultant lack of a broad vision, that there was every possibility that their fate may not be different from that of the Muslims of Spain, who had ruled that part of Europe at least for the same number of centuries as Muslims had ruled the sub-continent. Unfortunately, the Hindu leadership represented by Mr. Gandhi, Moti Lal Nehru, Madan Mohan Malavia and Tilak etc. showed a lack of vision and made no honest effort to dispel their fears. Their pronouncements were sometimes vague, sometimes legalistic and very often provocative. The result was that Muslims were pushed into a political stream of their own, distinct from the stream of Hindu nationalism. It was in this background and in this atmosphere of political climate that Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah went to Lahore and had his early political schooling. He was a frequent visitor to Sir Mohammad Iqbal, the greatest of all Kashmiris of all times and it was quite natural that his political philosophy should have made

such a deep impact on his mind that even in later years, he would begin his public speeches with a recitation of some of his verses.

He returned to Srinagar in 1927 and remained there for over a year before proceeding to Aligarh. While at Aligarh, Mr. Jinnah, Mr. Gandhi, Ali Brothers and Moti Lal Nehru visited the University campus and addressed the students. He could not have remained unmoved.

At the other end of the State, in the city of Jammu, which was the winter capital of the Maharaja, another man, Chaudhri Ghulam Abbas, born on 4th February 1904, was coming up with the same passions.

About the year 1916-17, General Summander Khan applied to Maharaja Pratap Singh for permission to set up a non-political Muslim Association. After the permission was granted in 1921, a society known as "Anjuman-e-Islamia" was formed to look after the educational and social welfare of the Jammu Muslims. Among those actively associated with its formation and growth were Sardar Mohammad Akbar Khan, Syed Altaf Ali Shah, Sahibzada Hazrat Shah, S. Asadullah Shah, Munshi Mohammad Yaqoob, Col. Yar Mohammad Khan, Sheikh Mohammad Ibrahim and Sheikh Abdul Aziz Vakil. In the first instance, it opened a primary school which was gradually raised to the status of a High school and named, Akbar Islamia High School. Annual meetings attended by thousands of Muslims from all parts of Jammu and addressed by prominent Ulema from India, became a regular feature of its activities. These meetings, religious in character, largely contributed to the failure of the Arya Samajist campaign for conversion of Muslims to Hinduism. With the passage of time, a group of youth, including Mistri Yaqub Ali, Gauhar Rehman, Bashir Ahmad Qais, Ghulam Haider Chamri, Ch. Ghulam Abbas, Rehmat Ullah Butt, Mohammad Tufail, Gulzar Hussain Qamber, and Ghulam Pehlwan tried to broaden its sphere of action. This was resisted by the elders and for good reasons too. It was under these circumstances that another society known as the "Young Mens' Muslim Association" was formed with an eye on popular mobilisation for political awakening.

By about the same time, when political agitation was about to gain momentum, three youthful employees of the Co-operative department, Mr. Abdul Majid Qarshi, later editor "JAMHOOR", Mr. Rehmatullah Butt and Mr. Nazir Ahmad were encouraged by their departmental Head, Khan Bahadur Abdul Majid, to collect authentic data regarding the meagre representation of Muslims in the Services and get it published in the Lahore Muslim press such as Daily "SIASAT", Daily "Muslim Outlook," the Daily "Zamindar" and the Daily "Inquilab." These despatches not only helped in the building up of a strong public opinion in northern

India but also in kindling at home, the flames of struggle for a better tomorrow. The son of Ch. Nawab Khan, whose fore-fathers had migrated from Jullundhur perhaps during the middle of the nineteenth century and who belonged to the Rangarh sub-caste of Rajputs, Ch. Ghulam Abbas Khan was connected with the latter Association, even before he went to Lahore for his law degree. At that time a dangerous anti-Muslim campaign known as "The Shudi and Sangathan Movement" was sweeping through northern India. It had been launched with the declared object of bringing about the conversion of Muslim masses to Hinduism. The argument advanced was that since their great majority had been converted to their present faith, centuries ago, from Hinduism, they must revert back to the religion of their Hindu ancestors. The movement unfortuately had the backing of the Hindu capitalists who at the same time financed the Congress; it also had the tacit support of many a leading Congressmen on provincial level such as Purshottam Das Tandon in U.P., Lala Lajpat Rai and Doctor Bhargava in the Punjab, the Patel brothers in Gujrat and Pandit Ravi Shankar Shukla in C. P. etc. It seems that Congress leadership was getting worried about the revolt of Muslim masses against its concept of freedom, which, as already stated, meant the brute majority rule of the Hindus. This movement naturally had its reactions and several Muslim organisations sprang up to undo the mischief. One such association, the Anjuman-e-Tabligh-ul-Islam, was founded by Maulana Ghulam Bhik Nairang, a long time member of the Central Assembly. In certain parts of Jammu province, the Shudi movement, which had the tacit backing of the Dogras, did make serious inroads. At the request of the Association, two Maulvis were sent from Lahore, one by Mr. Nairang and the other by Maulana Ahmad Saeed of the Jamiat-ul-Ulema; they spent eighteen months touring the interior to counter the propaganda of Hindu preachers. This enhanced the prestige of the Association in the eyes of local Muslims. An annual session of the Association was held in 1924 which was attended by Maulana Ghulam Bhik and Maulvi Abdul Haq Vidyarthi who had dedicated himself entirely to the anti-Shudi campaign. Meanwhile, Chaudhri Ghulam Abbas spent three years in Lahore and passed his LL.B. in 1931. The Muslims of Jammu province are culturally and socially closer to the Muslims of Punjab than their co-religionists from Kashmir valley. Their language, dress, customs and even food are the same. Because of the nearness of Punjab, they have been freely moving across each other's border since centuries and have been linked in inter-marriages. The result was that the political or religious movements that sprang up in the Punjab had an immediate echo in the province. The Punjab press was also easily and readily available.

The statement of Sir Albion Bannerji created a stir. It was widely

commented upon in the press and effectively taken up by Muslim organisations, particularly in the Punjab, to focus public attention on the miserable plight of the Muslims of Kashmir. On its part, the Dogra Government utilised the "services" of its Education Minister, Agha Saeed Hussain, who shuttled between Srinagar and Jammu, trying to persuade Muslims to issue slanderous statements against Sir Bannerji and refute his highly damaging statement. Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah was then in Aligarh and, according to Pandit Prem Nath Bazaz, took effective steps to frustrate these efforts. The Minister gathered a number of leading Muslims at Jammu but Mistri Yaqub Ali, one of the invitees, opposed the move. He, however, succeeded in getting a pro-Government statement signed by General Summandar Khan, Col. Ghulam Ali Shah, Mirza Ghulam Mustafa and other darbaris, claiming that Muslims were leading a very happy and contented life and that, as compared to the inhabitants of other princely States, they were economically prosperous!

ناطقہ سر بہ گریباں ہے اسے کیا کہیئے -

On 12th April, 1930, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, Mr. Mohammad Rajab, M.A., LL.B., Qazi Saif-ud-Din, B.A., B.T. and Ghulam Ahmed Mukhtar, M.A., B.T. arrived back in Srinagar after completing their studies in Aligarh. Their stay in India seems to have convinced them that a mass movement alone could secure Muslims their rights which had been so ruthlessly usurped by their rulers. According to Mr. Rashid Taseer, they had already in hand, broad outlines of a plan when they returned to Srinagar.

As no political or non-political society could be formed, Mr. Mohammad Rajab, in collaboration with another zealous collegiate, late Mr. Bashir Ahmed, who retired as Revenue Assistant Muzaffarabad, set up a small Reading Room in the house of one Syed Ali Akbar which was partly occupied by a Post Master, Sikandar. It was a cover meant to camouflage the political discussions held and to ward off immediate suspicion that could have otherwise attended the coming together of a dozen or more unemployed graduates. A sum of Rs. 82/- was raised by contribution to meet the cost of the newspapers. Encouraged by the response of educated Muslims and the interest shown by the uneducated, the Reading Room was given a regular organisational shape. An election was held in which Mohammad Rajab and Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah were elected President and Secretary respectively. Mufti Jalal-ud-Din, Hakim Ali, Pirzada Master Ghulam Rasool, Pirzada Ahmed Shah Fazili and Hakim Ghulam Murtaza were elected to the Managing Committee.

The plans that some of them had envisaged while at Aligarh now began to take shape. Having succeeded in setting up a base camp in the shape of the Reading Room, they began establishing contact with Muslim newspapers at Lahore. They also established contact with Sir N.L. Bannerji who was editing a monthly magazine in London, named "Indian States", which was exclusively devoted to the betterment of the inhabitants of the Princely States. As a result of this contact, articles based on the data furnished by them began to appear in the magazine bringing home to British public opinion the pathetic condition of the State people. Maulana Azad welcomed the setting up of the Reading Room as the corner-stone of a bright future for the State. Maulana Azad Subhani, Khatib Jamia Masjid Calcutta, who was considered a leading exponent of Jamal-ud-Din Afghani's Pan-Islamic movement, was also taken into confidence. He travelled to Srinagar incognito and held several meetings with the Reading Room party, and gave them a detailed exposition of the concept of Pan-Islamism. He also gave them useful suggestions for the launching of a popular movement. The Kashmir Government came to know of his visit only after he had left the State. This resulted in strengthening the watch on the party.

FRAMING CIVIL SERVICE RULES WITH ULTERIOR ENDS

It was a strange coincidence that with the return of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah and other graduates from Aligarh, the Civil Service Recruitment Board, which had been recently set up, framed certain rules which do appear to have been intended to prevent the entry of Muslims. Sixty percent vacancies were to be filled in by the Government without any reference to the Board; as to the remaining forty percent, every candidate was required to deposit a sum of rupees fifty as fee, the maximum age for recruitment was fixed at 22 years and it was also made obligatory for an applicant to possess a "good family background" and even if a Mussalman was lucky enough to cross all these hurdles, the Government reserved the right to reject him without assigning any reasons whatsoever. It was felt that the devices were invented to give a legal cover to the policy of denying them due representation. It is also interesting to point out that almost the entire group of udemployed Muslim graduates or double graduates was above 22 years of age and, therefore, clearly stood debarred from recruitment to any respectable service.

The Reading Room was now better organised and Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah used to spend almost his entire free time there. From the

house of Ali Akbar, it appears to have been shifted to a shop known as 'Dukan-i-Sangin', it was now shifted to the house of Mufti Jalal-ud-Din. It did not take him long to influence the visitors to the Reading Room. To begin with, therefore, he called a meeting of the unemployed Muslim graduates which was also attended by a few others who frequented the Reading Room. In the meeting, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah explained the implications of the recent Regulations and also dwelt at length on the political and economic subjugation of Muslims. He secured their agreement to present a memorandum to the Government registering their protest against the enforcement of these Rules. A memorandum was therefore drafted and sent to the Government under their signatures. Hari Singh was then in Europe; a few days after its submission, Thakar Kartar Singh, Secretary to the Cabinet invited a deputation of the signatories for a meeting. The Reading Room party, chose Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah and Mr. Abdul Aziz Fazili who met the three-member Cabinet, comprising Mr. Wakefield, Mr. Wattal and General Janak Singh. Both Mr. Wattal and Wakefield tried to frighten them away and sought to show how benign the Dogra rule was. Mr. Wattal even went so far as to accuse Muslims of being "ungrateful", citing the recruitment of two or three Muslims in the office of the Accountant General, during a course of many years' ministership, as proof of his solicitude for them. Sheikh Abdullah then gave them a detailed exposition of the Muslim point of view, supporting it with facts and figures collected from official records. According to Mr. Bazaz, he also told them that if their grievances were not redressed soon, the day was not far off when the Government would have to repent for its apathy and neglect.

When proceedings of the meeting were reported to other colleagues, they all agreed that it was useless to expect justice and fair play from the Dogra Government and that it was time to rise to the occasion and prepare Muslims for a political movement to gain their rights. They were conscious that the task ahead was difficult and that they would have to pay in sweat and tears but this did not deter them from their deliberately chosen path.

The Party, therefore, started with bringing about regularity and frequency in its contacts with Muslim newspapers outside the State and sent them regular despatches about the discrimination practised against Muslims and their general political and economic condition. The entry of "Siyasat" and "Muslim Outlook", which had already rendered valuable services to the cause of Kashmiri Muslims, was banned. According to Mr. Bazaz, "Inquilab" was the only Muslim daily newspaper the entry of which had not been banned as yet. It was perhaps because of the support it enjoyed of the then Punjab Government.

When the Reading Room Party published the correspondence on the issue of the Services Recruitment Board Rules, the Government felt embarrassed because, in its view, these unknown youth had not only successfully drawn it into a public controversy but had also thus manipulated to raise themselves in public estimation. No further parleys were, therefore, held nor any more letters exchanged. It was at this stage that a more militant group calling itself the "Muslim Youngmens' Association" appeared on the scene by circulating a pamphlet entitled "Replica" which contained an exposition of the Service Rules and how it was intended to frustrate Muslim aspirations. The pamphlet also announced the existence of the secret society and proclaimed that it had been formed to fight for the rights of Muslims. A few days later the following were elected its office-bearers: President, Khawaja Ghulam Ahmed Ashai; Secretary, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah; Members of the Executive, Khawaja Ali Shah, Hakeem Ali, Hakeem Mohammad Safdar, Khawaja Mohammad Rajab, Hakim Ghulam Murtaza, Pirzada Ghulam Rasool, Ahmed Shah Fazili, Pirzada Ghulam Ahmed, Ghulam Hassan Khan, Ghulam Mohammad Khan and Khawaja Ahsanullah. It may be categorically emphasised that it had nothing to do whatsoever with the Youngmens' Muslim Association functioning in Jammu.

The Reading Room Party at Srinagar and the Youngmen's Muslim Association at Jammu had no mutual contact, but when the news of the deputation's meeting with the cabinet and the topics they discussed, was published in the Lahore press, the latter sent a deputation, which included Mr. Abdul Majid Qarshi, to contact them at Srinagar. They came to Srinagar in the 1930 winter and had several meetings with Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah and his colleagues. As a result of these discussions, it was decided to co-ordinate their campaign. The immediate result of this collaboration was that publication of articles supported by facts and figures in the Muslim press, particularly in the columns of the daily "Inquilab" was intensified and there was hardly a week when the condition of the Muslims of Kashmir and criticism of the Dogra Government for its anti-Muslim policy did not find a prominent place in its columns. This unnerved the Government and as is customary with totalitarian regimes, the entry of daily 'Inquilab' was also banned.

FAILURE OF LOYALISTS TO ACCORD H.H. A PUBLIC WELCOME

Maharaja Hari Singh was then in Europe with his wife. He had gone there to attend the Round Table Conference convened by the

British Government to evolve a formula for the grant of self-government to the sub-continent. It was at this time that Prince Karan Singh was born to Maharani Tara Devi at Cannes in France. Among the leading Kashmiri Pandits was, an S.D.M. Pandit Balkak Dhar, a descendent of Raj Kak Dhar who held a jagir in Baramula district. He convened a meeting of the leading Jagirdars and men of influence in Srinagar with the ostensible purpose of setting up a Reception committee for according Maharaja Hari Singh a popular welcome on his return from Europe and felicitate him on the birth of the heir-apparent. Tara Devi was Hari Singh's fourth wife. He had no child from the first three and even Tara Devi to whom he was married somewhere in 1927 had no issue until and after the birth of Karan Singh. Actually Pandit Dhar wanted to manoeuvre his own election as President of the Reception Committee so that he could build up his own image in the eyes of his ruler and use it for furtherance of his personal ends. Among the participants were Pandit Tara Chand Tirchhal, Mirza Ghulam Mustafa, Khawaja Ghulam Mohi-ud-Din Shawl, Pandit Nand Nal Mattoo, Pandit Ragho Nath Mattoo, Khawaja Ghulam Mohi-ud-Din Kausa, Munshi Assadullah Vakil, Agha Syed Ali Shah, Hakim Mohammad Ali, Pandit Amar Nath Kak, Pandit Tara Chand Vakil, Khawaja Saad-ud-Din Shawl, Pir Maqbool Gilani of Khanyar and Khawaja Noor Shah of whom mention has already been made in connection with the presentation of a memorandum to Lord Reading. When the election of the Committee's office-bearers came up for discussion, Khawaja Noor Shah opposed the election of Balkak Dhar on the plausible ground that the Committee should be headed by a non-official. The argument was really convincing but Mr. Dhar succeeded in getting himself elected as President because most of the invitees were his personal friends. Mirza Ghulam Mustafa was elected Vice-President and Khawaja Ghulam Ahmed Ashai, its Secretary.

The Reading Room Party, which had by now achieved some influence and was increasingly getting into prominence, could not miss such an opportunity. They brought pressure on Muslim elements in the Committee to dissociate themselves from it and form an exclusively Muslim Reception Committee because, in their view, it was the best way to frustrate the royalist efforts to accord the Maharaja any reception at all. Pir Maqbool Gilani of Khanyar, himself a Jagirdar and a man of considerable influence, was sympathetic to their cause. A young man, it should be said to his credit, that he had a vision broader than that of the other members of his Jagirdar-brotherhood. He convened a meeting of about two hundred Muslims at his house. Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah and his colleagues were also invited. According to Taseer, it was attended

amongst others by the following: Maulana Yusuf Shah, Maulvi Mohd Abdullah Advocate, Mir Waiz Hamdani, Munshi Shahab-ud-Din, Mukhtar Shah petition-writer, Qazi Mustafa Shah Kothdar, Khawaja Ghaffar Joo Basu Kothdar, Ghaffar Joo Bandey, Ghulam Ahmed Zaildar Pampur, Umar Malik Pulwama, Mukhtar Lone Laigin, Akbar Dar Darbagham and Mirza Ghulam Mustafa. It was the first political meeting of so many Muslims some of whom came from outside Srinagar. The meeting which was presided over by Mohammad Abdullah Shora, was also addressed by Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah. According to Mr. Bazaz, he made a very forceful speech and called upon his fellow Muslims to stand on their own strength and have confidence in themselves. He also said that for the good of Muslims even if he had to undergo imprisonment, he would not be found wanting. According to Mr. Bazaz, the mention of such words created a sensation and most of the Jagirdars strongly protested against these remarks and called upon him to withdraw the same but Sheikh Abdullah stood by his words.[1] It was his first public address. The news spread fast and people felt interested in the man, who being the first M.Sc, was talking in terms of adopting a life of rigour and misery for the sake of his people and there is no doubt that the phenomenal popularity achieved by him in years to come, started on this fateful day. He was elected Convener of the Committee. A few more meetings were held in this connection and ultimately a Reception Committee was set up which telegraphed His Highness for permission to present an address of welcome. As correctly anticipated, Maharaja Hari Singh very wisely declined both the invitations.[2]

It was at this stage that Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah joined the State High School Srinagar as Science teacher on a salary of Rs. 60/- per month. It was, however, a temporary phase.

Certain events which show the popularity that Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah had already achieved in the city, may be briefly taken note of. Mir Waiz Maulana Ahmedullah, Mir Waiz Kashmir, breathed his last; the funeral procession was undoubtedly the biggest ever witnessed by Srinagar in living memory until then. It was led by Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah and his colleagues from the Reading Room Party. A few days later, when a mass meeting was held in the Jamia Masjid to celebrate the accession of Maulvi Atiqullah to the office of Mir Waiz, Sheikh Abdullah was invited to address the meeting and was heard with rapt attention. Another meeting was held in the Islamia High School to condole the death of the Maulana. Sheikh Abdullah was again invited to address the meeting.

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1 Kashmir Ka Gandhi, p. 31.
2 *Ibid.*, p. 31.

When in course of his speech, he criticised some members of the School Committee, one of them, Khawaja Ghulam Mohammad Malik tried to interrupt his speech whereupon a number of people immediately got up and heckled him. The speaker had to intervene to save him but the incident showed unmistakably that Master Abdullah, as he was then called, was no longer a mere school teacher but was well on his way to assume the mantle of leadership.

Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah has been gifted with a melodious voice. Deeply religious, he grew a beard during his youth. Recitation of Holy Quran by him was so enchanting and so deeply penetrating that it subconsciously attracted even passers-by and this writer has seen audience sobbing while he was reciting a portion of the Holy Book. Deeply religious even to its minutest details, as the Muslims of Kashmir are, it was quite natural that they should have been deeply thrilled by such superb recitation of the Word of Allah and strongly felt drawn towards Him.

By banning the entry of Inquilab, the Government intended to prevent the damaging material it published about the administration from being read inside the State but the objective failed because as soon as the newspaper's entry was banned, declarations for other newspapers such as "Kashmiri Mussalman," "Kashmiri Mazloom" and "Maktoob-e-Kashmir" were taken out by Muslim groups at Lahore working for Kashmir. They were published in thousands, priced one pice per copy and smuggled through lorries, trucks and cars and sold like hot cakes. This helped in furthering the tempo of the agitational mood that was now fast building up. It was apparent now to any discerning observer of the scene that the whole State was seething with discontent and all that was needed to kindle the flames of a violent revolt, was just a spark which was soon provided by the Government itself. The wave of political awakening which had thus begun to blow was construed as a danger by the State Hindus because of their obstinate unwillingness to share power with the majority. The Rajput Sabha, an exclusively Dogra society, incited by Thakar Kartar Singh, a relative of the Maharaja, started a virulent anti-Muslim campaign; the Muslims were accused of plotting to overthrow the Hindu dynasty and establish Muslim rule; the Maharaja was assured of their full support in crushing the Muslim'traitors'. A Pandit collaborator from Srinagar, Gwasha Lal, contributed highly inflammatory articles in such rabidly anti-Muslim journals of India as "Princely India" and "Rajasthan".

This totally unwarranted campaign had its own repercussions. The

Muslims now also demanded the immediate dismissal of Thakar Kartar Singh, Mr. Wattal and Pandit Ram Chand Kak, the Political Secretary. The hatred against the Government became so wide-spread that even traditionally non-political figures like Mir Waiz Yusuf Shah and Mir Waiz Hamdani took pride in associating themselves with the mainstream of Muslim thought. They began attending closed-door meetings of the group.

It was in one such meeting held in the house of Mufti Jalal-ud-Din that Mir Waiz Mohammad Yusuf Shah proposed that so long as they did not elect someone as leader of the group, the organisational side would remain weak and incomplete. It was in the same meeting that accepting his proposal to elect a leader, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah was unanimously elected leader of the Party.[1]

It must be recorded to the lasting credit of Mir Waiz that election of a comparatively unknown man like Sheikh Abdullah was sincerely accepted by him as a correct and binding decision. In a mass meeting held subsequently at the Jamia Masjid, Mir Waiz introduced him as "Our leader"; he told them that whatever he would say represents "my views and those of our entire people" and made an impassioned appeal to act upon his orders and implement the programme he placed before them. Despite acute differences that separated them soon and continued all through his life, Mir Waiz never doubted, in his heart, the correctness of the above decision. Years after partition, when Mr. Shuaib Qureshi, Minister Kashmir Affairs, Government of Pakistan, asked him, in course of a meeting at Murree, to "name one such Kashmiri-speaking Muslim who really represented them," (to be appointed a Minister in Azad Kashmir), Mir Waiz Sahib told him unreservedly though sharply that it was only Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah!

THE INCIDENTS OF KHUTBA AND TAUHIN-I-QURAN

Five important incidents which took place at the time in quick succession, provided the spark needed to kindle the flames of revolt. In the first case, a leading land-holder in Udhampur embraced Islam. The Hindu Tehsildar sanctioned a fresh mutation of his lands, eliminated his name and mutated the same in the name of his brother. He filed a suit which was dismissed with the remarks that unless he re-entered Hindu faith, he was not entitled to any property. This was done in accordance with a decree issued by the Dogra Government on 31st December, 1892, which is reproduced below:—

1 Taseer, p. 90.

"READ a report of the Wazir Wazarat Anantnag to the effect that a Pandit resident of Pariwan has, alongwith his wife and children, embraced Islam and his mother has applied that her son, the new convert, should be turned out of their house as under the orders of His Highness the Maharaja Bahadur, any person abjuring the religion of his fore-fathers is deprived of succeeding to the property of his father.

RESOLVED by the Council that action may be taken according to Law and ancient usage.

This resolution be published in the form of a circular for the information of the public."[1]

It may be pointed out that in British India, as far back as 1850, "The Caste Disabilities Removal Act" had protected the property rights of persons renouncing their faith but despite great demand by Muslims, it was not enforced in the State, solely to prevent the spread of Islam and Christianity.

The second incident took place at Digore, a village in Jammu. A local police officer forbade the use, for Eid prayers, of a ground, which had been traditionally used for this purpose. The news got considerable publicity.

The third incident took place on 29th April, 1931, in Jammu city. The Muslims said their Eid prayers in a garden owned by the Municipal Committee. The prayers were led by Mufti Muhammad Ishaque. After prayers, he read a few verses from the Holy Quran relating to Pharaoh and Moses and explained its historical significance in his Khutba. A police sub-inspector, Babu Khem Chand, was on duty alongwith a posse of policemen. When the Imam spoke of Pharaoh as a cruel and tyrant king, the Sub-Inspector ordered him to stop the Khutba as in his view the Imam had transgressed the bounds of law and was guilty of treason. A young man, Mir Hussain Bakhsh, stood up to defy the ban and addressing the people told them that the Government had been guilty of interference in their religion. The cry was taken up by the congregation; they marched in a procession to the city's main mosque where a brief meeting was held condemning the incident. It was resolved to hold a protest meeting in the evening. One of the biggest ever gatherings in the city, it was presided over by Mir Hussain Bakhsh. The Muslims felt deeply injured. Politically suppressed and economically strangulated, the interference now in their

1 J. & K. Laws, V. I, p. 21.

religious observations, aroused deep hatred against their rulers. The meeting was addressed by Chaudhri Ghulam Abbas Khan, Sardar Gauhar Rehman Khan, and Mistri Yaqub Ali. Holding of protest meetings from now on became quite frequent. The Muslims brought a complaint in the court of A.D.M. under section 296 Penal Code against the Hindu Inspector for disturbing a religious assembly which was dismissed as the Hindu Magistrate held that Khutba was not a part of the prayers. A large crowd of Hindus who were present in the Court premises raised the slogans of 'Khem Chand Zindabad' and 'Hindu Dharam Ki Jai'. It heightened the public agitation because it was felt that the Magistrate had interpreted the law incorrectly so as to give undue protection to his co-religionist. The Government now realised the gravity of the situation and very wisely went in appeal to the High Court against the order of acquittal. The High Court decided the appeal forthwith, holding that Khutba was a part of the prayers. Meanwhile the Government suspended the police Inspector but chose not to take any drastic action against him which alone could have at least partly satisfied the agitated Muslim minds.

The fourth incident took place on 4th June in the Central Jail Jammu.[1] One Fazal Dad Khan, a police constable from Mirpur, whom this writer met in 1954 at Mirpur and who died later in England, was sitting on a cot when a Head Warder, Balak Ram, reprimanded him for being late on duty. In the meantime came one Labhu Ram Sub-Inspector who threw away his bedding in a fit of rashness. It contained a copy of Panjsurah (Five Chapters from Holy Quran). The Sub-Inspector did not know of it but it is alleged that when Fazal Dad protested and brought this fact to his notice, he was devilish enough to kick it. Fazal Dad approached his seniors and tried to get him departmentally punished but as nobody took notice of the complaint, he made an application to the Young Mens' Muslim Association. They reacted sharply as any Muslim in any part of the world would react in such a situation.

The fifth incident took place in Srinagar on 20th June when leaves of the Holy Quran were found in a public latrine. No Muslim could ever dare do that. No Muslim can even think of it. It was apparent that the Hindus were out to outrage their religious feelings.

MIR WAIZ JOINS THE MOVEMENT

While the agitational mood was thus developing in Jammu city, news of the jail incident reached Srinagar and further inflammed the public

1 Inquilab, dated 1-7-1931.

opinion. Posters containing the news, printed mostly at Sialkot or Lahore and smuggled mainly through the efforts of Mr. Abdul Majid Qarshi, were distributed all over the Valley. The Reading Room Party was by now better organised and better known with Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah as their principal spokesman. Apart from Mr. Fazili, those working with him were Mr. Ghulam Nabi Gilkar, Maulvi Abdur Rahim, and Mr. Rajab. Khawaja Saad-ud-Din Shawl whose banishment order had been withdrawn, Khawaja Noor Shah Naqshbandi and Maulvi Mohammad Abdullah, men of great intelligence and deep insight, did their best to build up the young leadership of the Reading Room Party. Among those who were working in the background was Mr. Ghulam Ahmed Ashai, who had passed his M.A., M.O.L. from Calcutta and had been described to this writer by Chaudhri Ghulam Abbas as "the one man in the entire Valley who personified the intelligence and culture of the Kashmiri-speaking people."

The family of Mir Waiz Mohammad Yusuf Shah commanded great respect, particularly in Srinagar. It had, for generations, provided religious leadership and rendered valuable service to the Faith during the dark days of the Sikh and early Dogra rule when Islam was really in danger of an assault by its sworn enemies. It had set up a society known as "Anjuman-i-Nusrat-ul-Islam" which ran a High school and a few primary schools in Srinagar towards the end of 1930. Mir Waiz Mohammad Yusuf Shah, a cousin of Mir Waiz Atiqullah whom he later succeeded, received his education in Deoband, and was, like men of his age, attracted by the Khilafat Movement, which shook the sub-continent soon after the treaty of Versailles. On account of his stay and travels in India which was then in the grip of a great political movement, Mir Waiz Yusuf Shah felt interested in politics and when he returned to Srinagar after completing his religious studies, he too was depressed to see the miserable condition of his co-religionists, the denial of opportunity for progress and was also struck by the absence of the freedom of speech, press and association which were available to a considerable extent even in British India. Fortunately for the Muslims of the State, co-operation and understanding between him and the Reading Room Party was thus easily possible. This was of great help to the movement. While it is not correct to say that the 1931 Movement could not have taken place without his cooperation, nonetheless, it is undeniable that Sheikh Abdullah would not have so quickly emerged as a political leader without his assistance. Kashmir was at that time at the threshold of a revolution and it is too naive to say that the revolution could have been halted or frustrated if some person of whatever influence, may not have co-operated. The theory was invented mainly to belittle the impact of the appearance of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah on the scene. However, there is no denying of

the fact that if Mir Waiz had not so readily co-operated, the movement may not have assumed such a formidable shape in Srinagar so early as it did by April, 1931.

THE FIRST PRISONER

Hundreds of copies of the posters published by the Young Mens' Muslim Association Jammu were sent to Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah for distribution. In Srinagar, a volunteer, Mohammad Ismail, was caught by the police while affixing a poster and put in jail. According to Pandit Bazaz, he was the first political prisoner of the Movement.[1] Thousands of people collected outside the jail when news of his arrest became known. The I.G. Police, the D.I.G. and the District Magistrate also arrived with a strong police force and dispersed the crowd. An announcement was immediately made on behalf of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah requesting people to attend a protest meeting at Jamia Masjid in the evening. According to Mr. Bazaz, it was attended by about thirty thousand people and was the first public meeting in the city with politics as theme of the speeches. Says Mr. Bazaz:

> "Kashmiri Muslims had by now become fully acquainted with Master Abdullah. They had begun to think that some miraculous personality had been raised from amongst them who had, after attaining high education, dedicated his life to their service but most of them had not so far had the privilege of personally seeing him; they were very keen and were waiting for an opportunity like this when he was to appear before them. His name had by now already become associated with many a fables, so when standing on the stage in Jamia Masjid, he started addressing the thirty thousand crowd present in the meeting, he started his speech with a recitation from the Holy Quran and made an impassioned speech protesting against the sacrilege committed in Jammu, the people started crying bitterly. He did not confine himself to the question of sacrilege but also reminded Muslims that they were slaves and impressed upon them the necessity of fighting for their fundamental rights."[2]

After the meeting, a large part of the crowd refused to disperse and followed him to his residence in a procession raising slogans of Islam Zindabad and Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah Zindabad.

The Government got alarmed at the sudden outburst of political activity and that too on such a gigantic scale. So, to counteract the impact, especially resulting from the public meeting, the Governor convened a meeting of city "notables". It was attended among others by Mirza

1 Kashmir Ka Gandhi, p. 37-38.
2 *Ibid.*, p. 38.

Ghulam Mustafa, Maulvi Rahim Shah Bande, Munshi Assadullah, Maulvi Mohammad Abdullah, Advocate, Pir Maqbool Gilani and Mufti Sharif-ud-Din. Mirza Ghulam Mustafa, Maulvi Rahim Shah Bande, Munshi Assadullah and Maulvi Sharif-ud-Din condemned the activities of the Reading Room Party and assuring the Government of their whole-hearted loyalty, suggested the imprisonment of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah and his colleagues. The other participants, particularly Maulvi Mohammad Abdullah and Pir Maqbool Gilani, however, opposed the move for arrest and told the Governor that so long as the grievances of Muslims were not redressed, the situation could not be improved. The Governor was not in a position to arrest Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah without risking a serious law and order situation but in his capacity as Chairman of the Repairs Committee of the Jamia Masjid, he issued an order forbidding holding of public meetings or delivery of speeches in the said mosque. Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah thereupon announced a fresh public meeting in the same mosque on the following Friday in defiance of these orders. Rahim Shah Bande was Mutawali of the Dargah at Hazratbal. It is undoubtedly the most important Muslim shrine in the State as it contains a sacred Hair popularly accepted as belonging to the Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him). It seems that it was under instructions from the Governor that the four notables named above who had reaffirmed their loyalty to the Maharaja, had gone to the Dargah on Friday; the Governor was also there. They intended to take advantage of the presence of a large number of Muslims and hold a public meeting to support the Government and condemn Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah who unexpectedly also turned up at the Dargah to inform the congregation about the meeting scheduled for the evening. With his appearance in the Dargah, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah was mobbed and people raised full-throated shouts of welcome. The Government could therefore, hold no meeting and the "notables" had to flee for their safety. They have since gone down as traitors and have never been able to regain even a semblance of the power and influence that used to be theirs. On the other hand, the public meeting at Jamia Masjid attracted unprecedented crowds who gave Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah a thunderous ovation. The meeting strongly condemned the attitude of the Government towards its Muslim subjects and apart from demanding prompt action against the defaulting Hindu officers in Jammu, also voiced political demands.[1]

SH. ABDULLAH RESIGNS FROM SERVICE

The alarm in the official circles was now on the increase. The Cabinet was divided in opinion. While Mr. Wakefield was advising moderation, Mr. P. K. Watal, who on account of being a Hindu, was nearer to the ears of Hari Singh and his Dogra advisers, was pressing for strong repressive

1 *Ibid.* p. 40-41.

measures. The Maharaja thereupon made speedy recruitment to the army from his own community and imported arms because it appears that he had come to believe that Muslims were going to rise in revolt. Whilst these preparations were afoot, Mr. Wakefield was asked to enter into negotiations with the Muslims. It was done partly to while away the time until Government preparations were complete and partly to keep him a witness with the British Government that the Maharaja did make efforts for a compromise. Mr. Wakefield went to Jammu and started a personal inquiry into the conduct of the Head Constable Labhu Ram. Mistri Yaqub Ali and Syed Altaf Ali Shah were associated with the inquiry as representatives of the Association. It was unanimously held that the Head Constable *had been* guilty of disrespect to the Holy Quran but while Wakefield held that it was accidental, Mistri Yaqub Ali came to the conclusion that it was a rash act. Syed Altaf Ali Shah alone held that it was a deliberate act. Simultaneously the Jammu Hindus started a boycott of the Muslim community. 124 carpenters and masons had to migrate to Quetta in search of employment. 48 Muslims employed by the Jammu Municipality as water-carriers were dismissed from service. As a result of the inquiry, the Head constable was retired while the Muslim Constable was dismissed from service. It is interesting to point out that the Head constable had completed thirty years of service and was to retire in about a few months. Such a result could hardly be expected to satisfy anyone, much less an agitated and inflammed public opinion. It was, therefore, natural that Muslims should have rejected these orders as unjust and unacceptable.

Instead of adopting a reasonable and just attitude towards the Muslim grievances, the Government thought that the removal of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah from Srinagar would automatically ease the situation because his growing popularity and fearless advocacy were considered primarily responsible for the agitational mood of the people. He was, therefore, transferred to Muzaffarabad as Science teacher in the local Government High School. At a meeting of the group, it was decided that the opportunity to strike at the autocratic regime having already presented itself, it was now time to give up the smoke-screen of service. Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah thereupon tendered his resignation[1] which was announced in a huge public meeting held at Khanqah-i-Mualla in course of a highly emotional speech that electrified the crowd. Maulana Zafar Ali Khan was then in Srinagar and had watched the fearlessness which was characteristic of Sheikh Abdullah's speeches. He was present on the platform when Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah stood up to deliver his address.

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1 Inquilab, dated 4-7-1931.

After hearing him for a few minutes, Maulana Zafar Ali Khan exclaimed in great joy, "Sher-i-Kashmir".[1] The slogan was beautiful. Lion as a symbol immediately appealed to the popular mood because it personified great strength and initiative which was important in the political climate of the time. The Movement also needed a slogan as is the case with every movement in the East. It is largely the image of the leader upon which depends the success or failure of a movement in the East. Quaid-i-Azam, Gandhi, Soekarno, Kamal Ataturk and Mao may be cited as classic examples. Maulana Zafar Ali Khan's ingenuity came to their rescue and provided a slogan which was destined to become their national cry in a few weeks.

During the K.L.M. late Sheikh Ghulam Ahmed, a retired Additional Rehabilitation Commissioner, told me that we must coin a suitable slogan which was a must for the success of a movement especially in northern India. He cited two instances, the slogan: "Pakistan Ka Matlab Kiya, La-ila-ha-illallah" and the Sikh slogan during the Shaheed Ganj Mosque agitation: "Sar Jave, te jave Sikha, par teri Sikhi na jave". It was in the light of his advice that Maulvi Abdul Aziz Rajourvi coined the following slogan: "Na Nehru se, Na Noon se, Kashmir Milega Khoon se".

1 Taseer, p. 94.

CHAPTER INDEX

CHAPTER IX

بناء کردند خوش رسمے بخاک و خون غلطیدن

THE MUSLIM REPRESENTATIVES

The move next initiated by the Government was to invite Muslim representatives to a meeting with Maharaja Hari Singh in order to afford them an opportunity of presenting their grievances personally to the ruler. Four representatives were to represent Jammu province while seven were to represent Kashmir province. The Young Mens' Muslim Association called a meeting of its members and chose the following four to represent them:—

1. Mistri Yaqub Ali;
2. Sardar Gauhar Rehman;
3. Chaudhri Ghulam Abbas Khan; and
4. Sheikh Abdul Hamid, Advocate.

Unlike their Jammu counter-parts, who chose to confine the meeting for selection to a dozen or two of the Association members, the Reading Room Party, through the superb strategy of convening a 50-thousand strong public meeting for a popular election of the Kashmiri-speaking qouta, not only widened the scope of the Maharaja's invitation but also strengthened their own bargaining power by demonstrating the power behind them.

In Srinagar there were two persons holding the religious title of Mir Waiz. The more important of the two has been already noticed. The other was Mir Waiz Ahmedullah, better known as Mir Waiz Hamdani. His influence was only a shadow as compared to that of the Mir Waiz from Jamia Masjid but, all the same, he too had a sphere of influence.

His seat of activity was Khanqah-i-Mualla, better known as Khanqah-i-Shah-i-Hamdan. Shah-i Hamdan, who figures in the Javed Nama of Iqbal, was a Persian prince-turned-mystic who visited Kashmir a few centuries ago and was largely instrumental in mass conversions to Islam. He was a contemporary of Kashmiri language's greatest poetess, Lalla Arifa, better known in Kashmir as Lall Maouj or Lall Ded. Shah-i-Hamdan is not buried there but the shrine treasures some of his belongings. It has a unique architectural beauty. When Sikhs conquered Kashmir, Sardar Phulla Singh, the Nihang, mounted heavy guns to demolish it but his adviser Pandit Birbal Dhar, well aware of the sanctity, it enjoys among local Muslims, restrained him from his proposed vandalism for fear of a popular riot.

A mass meeting was convened by the Reading Room Party at Khanqah-i-Mualla and it was for the first time in the history of the Valley that both the Mir Waiz sat on the same platform, touching each other's shoulders. The meeting, attended by about fifty thousand people, was the biggest political congregation until then. In a stirring speech, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah told them that the meeting had been convened to elect a 7-member deputation to present their demands to the Maharaja. Mir Waiz Mohammad Yusuf Shah stressed the supreme importance of sinking their differences to advance the common Cause. As a demonstration of his sincerity and to set a personal example, he shook hands, for the first time, with Maulvi Mohammad Abdullah, Advocate, an Ahmedi and his rival, Mir Waiz Hamdani. All this was dramatic enough to raise the tempo of political atmosphere in the meeting to a high pitch. It was also for the first time that thousands of women had joined a public meeting to demonstrate their solidarity with their menfolk in their hour of trial. It was also in this meeting that Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah took a public oath, with Holy Quran in his hands, pledging never to betray the Cause of the Muslims of Kashmir. Thousands of eyes were full of tears and the cries of "Zindabad", mingled with loud shrieks of thousands of others, were heard miles away in the stillness of the night. Iqbal had prophetically predicted years ago:

باش تا بینی کہ بے آواز صور
ملتے بر خیزد از خاک قبور

Trans: Wait to watch a people rise,
Without the clarion calling,
Though as silent as people of the grave.

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1 Inquilab, 9th July 1931.

At last, when Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah asked them to elect their representatives, as a demonstration of their full confidence, they authorised him to nominate them according to his own discretion. Thereupon the following names, proposed by him, were approved amidst wild scenes of popular acclamation:

1. Khwaja Saad-ud-Din Shawl.
2. Mir Waiz Mohammad Yusuf Shah.
3. Mir Waiz Ahmedullah Hamdani.
4. Agha Saeed Hussain Jalali.
5. Khawaja Ghulam Ahmed Ashai.
6. Munshi Shahab-ud-Din.
7. Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah.

ABDUL QADEER

The meeting was then dispersed but no one knew that something important was about to happen which was to be of great historical consequences. After the meeting, the leaders requested the people to disperse and themselves retired to a house in the vicinity of the Khanqah, ostensibly to have tea but actually to plan for the future. While the leaders were closeted there, large crowds continued to remain in the spacious compound of the Khanqah, waiting for their leaders to come out and disperse. It was under these circumstances and at this time that a robustly-built young man appeared before the crowd and started addressing them in chaste Urdu. He told them that they were slaves and that they were ruled by a Government whose officers had even the impertinence to insult their religion; he assured them of the solidarity of the Muslims of India and asked them to rise to the occasion and fight for the vindication of their honour. He warned the Government that Muslims would answer violence with violence, if their grievances were not redressed. Naturally, he received a prolonged ovation by a crowd that was thirsty of such words of courage, hope and support. This man was Abdul Qadeer. An employee of an English army officer Major Butt, of the Yorkshire Regiment then posted at Peshawar, Qadeer hailed from Amroha, a town in U. P. He had come to Srinagar with his employer who was a casual visitor on leave from the army wanting to spend the hot summer in the cool climate of Kashmir. He was staying in a house-boat in Nasim Bagh. According to Pandit Bazaz, Abdul Qadeer had already met Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah at the Jamia Masjid a few weeks ago and had not only congratulated him for his courageous speeches but had also requested for an opportunity to open his heart to his Muslim brothers. It seems

1 Rashid Taseer, p.

that Qadeer had been attending the meetings and at Khanqah-i-Mualla he was unable to suppress his feelings which resulted in his impromptu address to the crowd. His speech was recorded by the C.I.D. and when he returned to Nasim Bagh at the dead of night, he was followed by the Gestapo and arrested on 25th June from the house-boat of his employer and charged under sections 124-A (treason) and 153 of the Penal Code. According to the official version placed before the Court and admitted by him to be substantially correct, he told the meeting:

> "Muslim brethren! The time has now come when we should meet force by greater force to put an end to the tyrannies and brutalities to which you are subjected; nor will they solve the issue of disrespect to Holy Quran to your satisfaction. You must rely upon your own strength and wage a relentless war against oppression." Pointing his finger towards the palace, he thundered: "Raise it to the ground."[1]

When Muslims learnt of his arrest, there was wide resentment in the city. Their feelings were injured particularly because here was before them a brother Muslim from outside the State who had courted arrest for their sake and in vindication of their rights. The matter being sentimental, the people became acutely touchy. The result was that when he was put on trial before the Sessions Judge, Pandit Kishan Lal Kitchlu, thousands found themselves sub-consciously drawn to the Court. He was kept in the Central jail which is at a considerable distance from the Court. When he was taken on foot from the jail to the Court, he was followed by a large crowd which swelled into thousands by the time it reached the Court. They offered him flowers, fruit and sweets; some were unable to overcome emotions and burst into loud cries while many others kissed his hands and touched his clothes. It used to be a moving spectacle. It was the purest and the most spontaneous proof of the awakening that had dawned upon the Hatos. It showed their rapid transformation from fatalistic pessimism to that of a determined people. Maulvi Mohammad Abdullah, Advocate, acted as the Principal Defence Counsel. He was assisted by Pir Qamar-ud-Din and Mr. Ghulam Mohammad Pleaders. On 5h July, the Government shifted the venue of the trial to the Central jail, and also decided to hold it in camera. This caused great resentment. In a public meeting held in the evening in a mosque at Bata Malinu, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah and Maulvi Abdur Rahim condemned the holding of the trial in camera and called upon the audience to get ready for a resolute struggle as the Government

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1 Taseer, p. 96.

had failed to take a realistic view of the situation. They were reminded of the historic confrontation between them and the Unbelievers at Badar and told how 313 ill-armed persons had, with Faith in God and confidence in their destiny, defeated far superior forces, representing evil and injustice. Another public meeting was held in the mosque at Gau Kadal on 12th July which continued upto past mid-night and which was addressed by Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, Khawaja Ghulam Nabi Gilkar and Maulvi Abdur Rahim. After the meeting, the participants returned to their homes in small groups chanting the following verse of a Muslim revolutionary, perhaps, hanged by the British in U.P. :

سرفروشی کی تمنا اب ہمارے دل میں ہے
دیکھ لیں گے ، زور کتنا بازوئے قاتل میں ہے

Trans: We now long for martyrdom,
Let the executioner prove his prowess.

Maharaja Hari Singh who had lately returned from London, was upset to find the political atmosphere so different from what it was when he had left the State. On 9th July, he issued a message to "his" people reiterating that his religion was Justice and that all his public acts and policies were guided by it. He promised not to allow discrimination against any class of people on account of religion but laid down two fundamental conditions, namely, that political activities were confined within the law of the land and that no outside intervention was sought in any shape or form. At the same time, the message included the following threat:

> "I cannot allow my Government to be coerced, by threats, into unjust action; it is my duty to protect the law-abiding sections of my people from any encroachments on their lawful rights. The immediate burden of maintaining law and order necessarily falls on the Magistracy and the Police whose duty it will be to ensure that the Law is upheld at all costs and where it is defied, its authority is restored......I assure them that they will be supported by myself and my Government in the due discharge of their duties and will not be sacrificed to unjust clamour or intrigue."

It is obvious that this message could have hardly inspired confidence or impressed the Muslims any longer.

13th JULY MASSACRE

On 13th July 1931, thousands of Muslims assembled outside the Central jail. After the entry of the Sessions Judge, they demanded permission

to enter the compound. At this stage, Maulvi Mohammad Abdullah, Advocate, advised them to remain peaceful and abide by the wishes of the authorities. This calmed down the crowd; they withdrew from the gate and sat silently outside, waiting for news from inside. At this moment, no unauthorised person was inside the jail compound. At 1 p.m., Muslims began lining up for their noon prayers. In a few minutes came the Governor who snubbed the Police on duty for not having taken into custody those who had earlier attempted to enter the compound and foolishly ordered their immediate arrest. The police, thereupon, arrested five persons with the result that the crowd became restive and raised anti-Government and pro-Abdul Qadeer slogans. The situation became extremely grave and obviously it was the natural result of the Governor's reckless order. The crowd then attempted to force its entry into the compound and demanded the immediate release of their men. They also demanded permission to watch proceedings of the case. Instead of handling the situation with tact, the Governor lost his nerves and ordered the armed police to open fire. Even according to the evidence, officially placed before the Dalal Inquiry Commission, one hundred and eighty rounds were fired. Seventeen Muslims were killed on the spot and forty received serious injuries, five of whom died later in the Jamia Masjid. The Hindu daily Tribune, dated 28th July, 1931, admitted the loss of 21 Muslims in the firing. It goes to the credit of Kashmiri Muslims that even according to Mr. Wakefield, "the wounds of dead Kashmiris were all in front". However, the crowd could not be dispersed. After setting the police quarters on fire, they placed the dead and the injured on cots and using the blood-drenched shirt of a martyr as a flag, started in a procession towards Amirakadal, a place frequented by foreign visitors. As the procession slowly wended its way, reciting verses from the Holy Quran and occasionally raising slogans against the Government, its ranks were swelled by a large number of men and women, who joined it in an unending stream. By the time it reached Maharaj Ganj, one of the main markets which was on its normal route, and where some Hindu whole-salers had their shops, the number must have risen to about thirty thousand, a great majority of whom were weeping and crying in anguish. The scene was very grim. It is recorded by Chaudhri Ghulam Abbas Khan in his autobiography that the sky became suddenly overcast with dark frightening clouds and the city witnessed an unusual dust storm, unprecedented in living memory. As news of the great national tragedy became known, Muslims closed their business and joined the procession. When it reached Maharaj Ganj, the Hindu shopkeepers deliberately injured Muslim feelings by keeping their shops open. Some processionists thereupon requested

them to close down their shops but instead of complying with the reasonable request, in the interests of peace and good neighbourliness, one of them abused the martyrs as well as the processionists and condemned them as goondas. It was sheer bull-headedness because the processionists were already tense. This, therefore, though unfortunately, resulted in the looting of some shops but it is generally acknowledged that not a single article was taken away by anyone; these were either scattered in the bazar or put on fire. It also goes to their credit that despite grave provocation, not a single Hindu shopkeeper was molested.

Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah was at the time of firing at his home because no direction had been given to the people to go to the Central jail and he was, thererore, unaware of the happenings. When news of the incident was conveyed to him by a messenger, he hurried to the Jamia Masjid where the procession, after parading certain parts of the city, had just arrived. By this time, the crowd had swelled into a hundred thousand and they included men and women of all ages and all classes. At last, Kashmir was on the march and a glorious beginning had been made with the offering of the greatest sacrifice known in history—the human sacrifice and that too by a people from whom it was least expected. Says Mr. Wakefield;

> "I think everybody is agreed that nobody anticipated that a Kashmiri mob would behave in a way it did and consequently no disturbances were anticipated."

A surprising aspect of the incident is that the Government pathetically ignored the treatment of the injured. No steps at all were taken to remove them to the hospital for treatment. This duty was performed by an English doctor of the Mission Hospital, who came with an ambulance and removed some of the more severely injured victims to his Hospital where they were treated as best as they could. The martyrs were kept in the Jamia Masjid for the whole night attended by Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah and his colleagues alongwith the entire mass of the people that had joined the procession. It is an irrefutable fact that no hearth was lighted that night in any Muslim home in the city and no one ate any food; so overwhelming was the sense of sorrow and so extensive the depth of reverence for the martyrs. As soon as the procession reached Jamia Masjid, the Government clamped Martial Law and handed over the city to the army. Brigadier Sutherland, Chief of Staff, hurried to the Jamia Masjid and cordoned it off with hundreds

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1 Nelson by Warner, p. 197.

of fixed bayoneted and heavily armed soldiers. Machine-guns were mounted at short intervals and aimed at the Mosque. Col. Omkar Singh was placed incharge of the machine-guns mounted on the main gate. It was a horrible spectacle. It was here that one of the martyrs who had not as yet breathed his last, told Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, "I have done my duty and now you proceed ahead". The illiterate martyr had never heard of Lord Nelson, to say the least of having heard of his remarks at the time of his death at Trafalgar.[1] Another martyr, Ghulam Nabi Kalawal, enquired from Mir Waiz Mohammad Yusuf Shah as to whether he was dying as a martyr and on being assured by him, that anyone who died in the firing or as a result of it, was certainly a martyr in the truest sense of the term, he immediately closed his eyes and reciting the Kalima, breathed his last.

The important problem that now confronted the leaders was about their burial. They desired to bury them in a single graveyard which could be treasured as a place of national pilgrimage, thereby not only preserving the sanctity of the day but also to enshrine it as a reminder to the coming generations that national salvation lay through sacrifice. The credit for this decision must go to Khawaja Noor Shah Naqshbandi because it was he who put forth the idea. When the matter was taken up with the Government, there was resistance but Noor Shah very cleverly prevailed upon the Governor and the military authorities by arguing that if so many persons were to be buried in their family graveyards, it would mean their burial in as many graveyards which was bound to create a serious law and order situation. At the same time, he offered the compound of Khanqah-i-Naqshband of which his father was the Muttawali. On the third day, they were buried there amidst scenes of a national mourning. Almost the entire Muslim population of the city was there. Thousands had also come from areas adjacent to the city. Most of them broke down under the strain of emotions. The place has since come to be known as Mazar-i-Shuhada where, every year on 13th July, Muslims from all over Kashmir assemble to enshrine their memory and rededicate themselves to the Cause of freedom and dignity. Given below is a list of the martyrs:—

NAME	AGE	RESIDENCE
1. Ghulam Mohammad Halwi	25 years	Jamia Masjid
2. Abdul Khalique Shora	33 years	Wazapura
3. Ghulam Nabi Kalawal	27 years	Pandan
4. Ghulam Mohammad Soofi	20 years	Daribal

1 Nelson by Warner, p. 197.



۱۳جولائی ۱۹۳۱ کو سرینگر سنٹرل جیل کے دروازے پر شخصی حکومت
کی گولیوں کے شکار

NAME	AGE	RESIDENCE
5. Ghulam Qadir Butt	22 years	Mohalla Bahandin
6. Mohammad Ramazan	19 years	Khanyar
7. Mohammad Usman	20 years	Kalashpura
8. Ghulam Mohammad Naqash	22 years	Kani Kadal
9. Ghulam Rasool Darzi	23 years	Ahmeda Kadal
10. Amir Joo Jandagaroo	27 years	Gojwara
11. Abdul Ahad	23 years	Gao Kadal
12. Ghulam Ahmed Kalbaf	32 years	Fateh Kadal
13. Amir Joo Makai	35 years	Nawa Kadal
14. Shaaban Joo Makai	60 years	Nawa Kadal
15. Subhan Khan	22 years	Nawab Bazar
16. Abdul Khalique	30 years	Watal Kadal
17. Mohammad Akbar	33 years	Zaldagar
18. Abdul Qadir	26 years	Bahandin
19. Ghulam Rasool Dora	27 years	Gotapura
20. Ahmed Rather	30 years	Naushdra
21. Ahmed Dar	30 years	Naushdra
22. Wali Wani	50 years	Batapura.

It will have been noted that none of them is less than nineteen years old while only two are above 35 years.

Before we proceed to detail the brutalities resorted to by the military and the chain of reaction all over the State, it would be useful to quote Justice Barjor Dalal, Chief Justice of the High Court at Srinagar, who was appointed to inquire into the incident of the firing. The Muslims, it may be kept in mind, had boycotted the inquiry. The Chief Justice held :

> "Abdul Qadeer was arrested on the 25th of June. During four hearings in the Court of Sessions on the 6th, 7th, 8th and 9th (July) it was found that the trial had greatly excited the Mohammadan public opinion and crowds of Mohammadans obstructed traffic on the way while the prisoner was brought to the Court and taken back every time to the judicial lock-up. Large crowds assembled in the Court and Court compound also......On 11th July the District Magistrate, therefore, suggested that the trial should be held in the jail and the permission was granted......100 policemen formed the Guard at the jail......as a rule 19 men are on duty at a time...... When the Sessions Judge arrived for the trial at about 1 p.m. a crowd of 4 to 5 thousand Mohammadans had collected at the Jail, and transparently the Police force was entirely inadequate to over-awe such a crowd......The Sessions Judge has stated that it was related

by the Jailor that the crowd wanted to enter the Jail building and to have a look at the face of the accused. There was not the permission given to the crowd......The total police force at that time consisted of 22 armed policemen and 119 other policemen. (Referring to the District Magistrate, the report says), it was his duty to question the mob, to find out what its object was and try to reason with it. This omission on the part of the D.M. has met with our disapprobation.... he thereupon ordered that the rioters (rioters for having entered the compound without permission) may be arrested......As to the wisdom of such an order we have doubts......As soon as some members of the crowd were arrested and five of them brought in, there happened what should have been predicted. The crowd grew restive and proceeded to throw stones......According to the Governor (D.M.), he gave orders which resulted in firing eleven times."[1]

Abdul Qadeer was externed from the State immeduately after completing his sentence.

In an interview published in Shabistan Digest Delhi and quoted by weekly "Kashir" Rawalpindi in its issue, dated 29th July, 1970, Sheikh Abdullah said:—

"I was attending a victim who told me in a fast fading voice: "Abdullah! I have done my duty. Now you proceed ahead". I did proceed ahead. Many an odds stood in the way but I surmounted them; so much so that the Premier, Pandit Hari Kishan Kaul stood like a wall in my way. I was rearrested on 21st September; in the Jail I was stripped completely naked and for 13 days I struggled between life and death but this did not damn my spirits; my aspirations did not cool off; my enthusiasm did not fade away. When I was released on 3rd October, I was again in the midst of the movement. The words of the martyr were still ringing in my ears: Abdullah! I have done my duty. Now you proceed ahead."

The same issue of the Rawalpindi newspaper has carried the following passage from a speech delivered in Jammu city by Chaudhri Ghulam Abbas Khan on 5th September, 1931:—

"The oppression and repression to which the Muslims of Srinagar have been subjected, has inflicted imperishable wounds on our hearts; actually these are the wounds that will prove a guiding force

1 Enquiry Report.

in our struggle for emancipation. The delicate plant that the movement is has been fed by the martyrs of Srinagar with their blood and the Muslims of the State will follow in their foot-steps and feed it with theirs. This incident in Srinagar is the beginning of our freedom movement."

The representatives from Jammu reached Srinagar in the first week of July and in keeping with their traditions of hospitality, were accorded a warm welcome. A house-boat was placed at their disposal where they stayed as guests of the Reading Room Party. Chaudhry Ghulam Abbas and Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah were no strangers. They had met in Jammu about a year ago when the latter returned from Aligarh and had a friendly exchange of views. Unfortunately, after the meeting at Khanqah-i-Mualla, the Government foolishly elected to change its mind. The haughty Maharaja, to his personal misfortune, withdrew his offer of an audience with the Muslim representatives. It happened soon after the election of Srinagar representatives on 21st June, 1931. Perhaps the popular character of the deputation frightened him. The brilliant strategy of getting the Srinagar quota elected, by acclamation in a mass meeting, had wider significance and considerably strengthened the hands of the deputationists. The failure of the meeting, therefore, would have been much more than the individual failure of its members; it would have amounted to a direct challenge to the Muslim masses. It seems that the offer of an audience was a mere eye-wash, aimed at cooling down the growing resentment without, however, redressing any of their many wrongs. Had the Maharaja been honest, the meeting had provided him with a unique opportunity to pacify Muslim public opinion. This unexpected withdrawal of the offer was considered by Muslims a deliberate insult to their sense of honour. It only deepened their indignation.

The Jammu representatives, however, stayed back in Srinagar. At mid-night falling between 13th and 14th July, Chaudhri Ghulam Abbas, Sardar Gauhar Rehman and Mistri Yaqub Ali were arrested from their house-boat and taken to Badamibagh cantonment. Warrants of arrest had been issued initially against Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, Maulvi Abdur Rahim, Ghulam Nabi Gilkar and the three leaders from Jammu. As the latter had returned to their house-boat from the Jamia Masjid after remaining there for a few hours, the police had no difficulty in arresting them immediately. On the other hand, Sheikh Abdullah and his two colleagues could not be immediately arrested as they remained in the Jamia Masjid where the martyrs were awaiting their burial and where their presence was necessary in order to prevent a further butchering of

the restive crowds. The Government naturally considered it impolitic and inexpedient to arrest them from such a huge mass of indignant and excited humanity. Next morning when Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah learnt that a warrant had been issued against him, he came out of the mosque with great difficulty and offered himself to Brigadier Sutherland for arrest. Gilkar was also arrested. They too were removed to the Badamibagh cantonment. Maulvi Abdur Rahim was arrested on the third day. A few days later they were removed to Hariparbat fort under a strong military guard. The city was under curfew and martial law had been clamped down. The army was under orders to shoot at sight and even then the army lined the entire route from Badamibagh cantonment to the fort, on both sides of the road—a distance of nearly five miles, to ensure their transfer without any public hindrance.

MARTIAL LAW AND THE REIGN OF TERROR

With the imposition of martial law, a reign of terror was let loose in the city; the incidents at Maharaj Ganj were immediately avenged by Hindus under the protection of, and in some cases, in collaboration with the army, by looting their Muslim neighbours in the predominantly-Pandit inhabited localities of Rainawari, Gunpatyar, Haba Kadal, Krala Khad and Barbar Shah. The army rule brought the vilest of cruelties in its train. Rowlat Act brutalities were repeated in the streets with greater callousness; Muslims were forced to kiss the Dogra flag, lick the shoes of the soldiers and salute every soldier with the Dogra salutation "Jai Dev Maharaj". Many incidents were reported when cavalry men entered isolated Muslim houses and ravished females. At Nawan Bazar a man was killed and two others wounded by military firing. A Christian lady, Mrs. Thakar Das, who appeared as a witness before the Dalal Riot Inquiry Commission, testified on oath that a soldier opened fire on a man who was running away and that another shot was fired at a water-carrier who was crossing a bridge. In another incident which was also placed before the Commission, the fingers of a small Gujar boy were blown off within the military lines. It goes to the lasting credit of the Muslims of Srinagar that they not only lighted the torch of freedom with a toll of so many human sacrifices but also defied the curfew and despite martial law, resulting in indiscriminate firing and ruthless repression by the trigger-happy soldiers, brought out hundreds of processions during those stormy days in defiance of Government regulations. According to official figures 326 persons were arrested in connection with incidents at Maharaj Ganj alone. Pandit Bazaz testifies that Hindus took undue advantage of the imposition of martial law and got every Muslim, with whom they had any grudge, arrested by the army, ostensibly on the allegation of being connected with the freedom movement.

Immediately after the firing outside the Central jail, all roads linking Srinagar with the outside world were closed and telegraph and telephone communications forthwith suspended, to prevent the news of the massacre from immediately reaching other parts of the State as well as the outside world. One Mr. Abdul Latif, a resident of Jammu, was employed as a chauffeur in the Tosha Khana. On the 13th evening he was ordered to drive a government vehicle from Srinagar to Jammu where he reached on the morning of 14th and conveyed the news of the tragedy to the relatives of Mistri Yaqub Ali. His son Sheikh Abdul Haiy conveyed it to Mr. A.R. Saghar, an intelligent young man who had just entered public life. They decided to leave for Lahore in order to convey it to Muslim newspapers. In Lahore they first went to Maulana Abdul Majid Salik who took them to Syed Mohsin Shah, an old-stock Kashmiri, for several years passionately working for the uplift of Kashmiri Muslims. Together, they went to Allama Iqbal. When he learnt of the killings, Iqbal is stated to have told them:—

> "One thing which clearly stands out about Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah is that he has completely removed from the Muslims of Kashmir the fear of going to jails or of facing the Dogra army. But with your limited resources and, comparatively, the unlimited resources at the disposal of the Dogra Government, you cannot continue like this for a long time; therefore, the only way out is to launch a movement in the Punjab and send volunteers from here because the Maharaja's resources would not be sufficient to withstand such a movement for a long time; he will have to seek the assistance of the British Government and when this assistance is sought and naturally, made available, that would be the appropriate moment for us to demand that if they wanted to intervene in the dispute on the side of the Maharaja, then they must equally ensure that important grievances of the State Muslims were also redressed."[1]

This is what actually happened soon afterwards and shows the great insight of Allama Iqbal.

Hand-written revolutionary posters appeared in Srinagar two or three days after the arrest of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah. These were written on the shop of Pir Abdul Ahad Shah. The Government successfully traced their origin and arrested Mr. Ahad Shah, Khawaja

1 As told to this writer by Sh. Abdul Haiy.

Ghulam Mohammad Sadiq and his sister's husband, Ghulam Mohi-ud-Din Kara. They were charged with treason but the case was later withdrawn.

Immediately after the firing on 13th July, the Muslims cut off telephone wires between the Central Jail and the Palace as well as between the Jail and the Police Headquarter. The Maharani donated a sum of rupees 3,000/- for distribution to the families of the deceased. During the next few days, the body of a Muslim women was recovered from the river in Srinagar; the body of a Pandit who had been cut into pieces, was brought to the hospital. Similarly, a Muslim boy whose hands and feet bore bullet marks, was also brought to the hospital.[1]

Again, in Srinagar, a Hindu grocer, probably a mahajan, was caught selling (to Muslims) spices ground to powder mixed with poison; he was arrested. The Muslim women took out a procession on 24th July, which terminated at the Mazar-i-Shohada. They again came out in a procession, on 27th July, participated by about 5,000, carrying black flags. It was lathi-charged; 10 women received injuries. Addressing the procession at Mazar-i-Shohada, a woman speaker said:

> "Our men should sit in their homes and wear burqas!... We are proud of our Punjabi Muslim brethren but so far they have confined themselves to merely issuing statements. ...We request the members of the British parliament to take our grievances to the League of Nations. ...We appeal to the army not to oppress women as it was no chivalry. But if they have any such instructions, they will find us ready to meet the challenge."[2]

THE BLOODSHED IN JAMMU

When news of the 13th July firing reached Jammu, the Youngmen decided to stage demonstrations. Among those who played a prominent role in the subsequent agitation, were S. Ghulam Haider Shah, Anwar Khan, Ghulam Pehlwan, Fazal Pehlwan, Gulzar Hussain Qambar, M. Meraj Din, Nabi Bakhsh Unsri, A.R. Saghar, Sain Mahna Qasab, Mohammad Hussain, Hamid Shah Andrabi, Mohammad Amin, Mufti Mohammad Ishaq, Ghulam Qadir Butt, Hussan Bakhsh Zargar, Nawab Mochi, Sh. Ghulam Qadir and Ch. Nawab Khan. Some of them were arrested for defying Section 144 Cr. P.C. but released four days later. Hindu officers felt very much annoyed but found themselves unable to suppress the movement which was spreading far and wide. Pressure was, therefore, exerted on Zaildars, Lambardars, and retired government officials to help in curbing it. Holding of mass meetings became a daily routine everywhere. There was hardly a day

1 Inquilab, 25th July 1931.
2 Inquilab, 2nd August 1931.

when a procession in defiance of Sec. 144 Cr.P.C. was not taken out or a public meeting held. Ch. Hameedullah Khan, later leader of the Muslim Conference Parliamentary group, Sheikh Abdul Haly and Sheikh Mohammad Salim, later Inspector General of Police Azad Kashmir Government, then B.A. students, remained actively associated with the Movement.

On 14th August a meeting was scheduled to be held in the Muslim Hall. As police surrounded it ahead of schedule, Muslims quietly moved on to Shahi Masjid. When the police came to know of the shifting of the venue, they rushed there but hundreds of people had already entered the mosque. Ch. Niaz Ahmad, city Magistrate, prevented the entry of Mr. Saghar. Thereupon, Sheikh Ghulam Qadir managed to climb to the minaret of the mosque and delivered a highly emotional speech. More than two dozen Muslims were arrested.

The repression let loose by the administration, instead of discouraging the people, built a spirit of self-confidence and courage which had been lacking for several decades. There was open defiance of the prohibitory laws. In the processions taken out and public meetings held in Jammu, people recited specially composed poems. A verse each, from two popular poems are given below:

اسیں پیدل ٹر کے جاواں گے
راجے نوں تختوں لاہواں گے

The other verse referred to the police firing outside Central Jail, Srinagar:

صدقے جانواں میں اس نماز اتوں
جس نماز اتے رفلاں چایاں نیں

The lack of communications and transport did not hinder the agitation. If any incident took place anywhere which required immediate attention of the neighbouring villages, slogans of Allah-o-Akbar and Islam Zindabad were raised from house-tops; the same were repeated in other villages with the result that Muslims living miles away were alerted within minutes. This process was particularly effectively employed in Mirpur district.

On 2nd November 1931, a band of Ahrar volunteers was attacked by Rajputs on their entry, near the village, Top Sarkhania, some two miles from Jammu on the Akhnoor side; a volunteer was killed. The tension in the city having extended to the Prince of Wales College,

there were minor clashes between Muslim and Hindu students. These were prompted mainly by Principal Seva Ram Suri's address in course of which he said that the Muslims were fighting for "loaves and bones". The Muslim students led by Sheikh Abdul Haq, Abdul Gani, Nazir Bajwa and Sheikh Mohammad Salim took exception to these unwarranted remarks which was followed by a hand to hand fight resulting in serious injuries to Sri Niwas, a Hindu student leader. When the news of the death of a Muslim from Punjab at Top-Sarkhania reached the city, hundreds of Musiims led by Sheikh Ghulam Qadir ran to the scene. Meanwhile, large numbers of Hindus gathered in Rugunath Bazar and city chowk; some were armed. The intention was to attack the Muslims, if they took out a procession. Eventually they attacked Ghas Mandi, raising slogans against Islam and Muslims as also 'Maharaja Bahadur Ki Jai'. Some passersby were attacked and injured. The Muslims were at the time holding a meeting at Shershah when they learnt of the presence, in the neighbourhood, of the excited Hindu mob. Sheikh Abdul Haq went upstairs and loudly shouted 'Jehad, Jehad'. Thereupon, Salim Khan, son of Umra Khan, Anwar Khan, Ghulam Pehlwan, and some others ran to the Ghas Mandi Chowk, raising counter slogans of Allah-o-Akbar and Ya Ali. Hindus started brickbatting from their roofs. Anwar Khan was seriously injured. One of the Hindu demonstrators died on the spot. In vain did Ghulam Pehlwan try to lift Anwar Khan who succumbed to his injuries a few hours later. These incidents were followed by rioting. By the next morning, the shops owned by Muslims in Panjterthi, Mandi Bazar, Bazar Bhabarian, Pacca Danga, Dhakki Serajan, Rugunath Bazar and city Chowk were almost wholly looted. Curfew had been clamped down to prevent Muslims from retaliation. Mr. Jenkins, later Governor Punjab, arrived on the next day with a British regiment which took control of the city immediately and started patrolling the streets. Martial Law was imposed and all offices and shops remained closed for 12 days. The British Administrator ordered registration of cases. Sheikh Abdul Rahim and Sardar Alam Khan Police Inspectors and Mirza Iqbal Din and Fazal Alam Sub-Inspectors were entrusted with the investigations. Fearing prosecution, bulk of the looted property was thrown by Hindus in the ponds known as Talab Rani and Rugunath temple talab. It was recovered several days later in a damaged condition. The British Army camped in the Company Bagh and remained in Jammu for over two months.

On the 3rd day were Muslims permitted to assemble in Pir Qadir Shah graveyard in order to offer Namaz-i-Janaza for Anwar Khan and four other martyrs.

The following persons took a prominent part in the Movement: Ch. Abdullah Bhalli and H. Abdul Rahim of Ranbirsinghpura, M. Ilam Din and Dr. Izzat Khan of Akhnoor, Kh. Amkallah, Kh. Amir Din, Kh. Aziz Din and Sheikh Imam Din of Reasi, M. Abdul Subhan of Ramban, Kh. Ahmad Din and Kh. Shamas Din of Banihal, Kh. Mohammad Khalil of Dodah, Kh. Ghulam Rasul and Kh. Ghulam Rasul Bhadarwahi of Bhadarwah, Kh. Nasrullah Haq of Kishtwar, Kh. Mangtu Mir of Balote, and Mirza Faqir Mohammad of Rajouri.

NON-MUSLIMS TESTIFY

The prisoners at Badamibagh were not treated well and the food served was extremely unsatisfactory. So, on the suggestion of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, the "royal prisoners", as they came to be known, went on a hunger-strike which compelled the Government to give them better treatment.[1] The entire business stood suspended. As news of the happenings in Srinagar reached other parts of the State, Muslims struck business, absented from their daily vocations and a country-wide movement for securance of political rights engulfed the whole State. According to Tribune dated 21st July, 1931, not even vegetables were available anywhere and the mail from outside the State remained piled up and undelivered. A procession at Nawan Bazar, in Srinagar, clashed with the army and in the firing resorted to by the latter, five Muslims were killed on the spot and fifteen seriously wounded. Though the curfew was lifted after a few days, not more than two persons were permitted to get together anywhere but it was of no avail. Colleges, schools, banks, offices and post offices remained closed because Hindu employees considered it unsafe to step out of their homes while Muslims were in no mood to resume their normal vocations until the Government came forward with substantial concessions. The traffic between Srinagar and Jammu remained suspended for 13 days. There were serious Hindu-Muslim clashes in Srinagar wherein three Hindus were killed and 163 injured.[2]

Says Pandit Prem Nath Bazaz:

> "It was for the first time in the history of Kashmir that people had struck work for political ends. Uptil now business used to be suspended only on occasions of deaths in the royal family but now it had been done in furtherance of the national cause; the strike was so complete that it had become difficult for anyone to open the shops. The Government did its very best and brought down its utmost

1 Kashmir Ka Gandhi, p. 52.
2 Inside Kashmir, p. 130.

pressure to cool down the enthusiasm of people so that they may resume their normal vocations but it was doomed to fail. In the city the processions of volunteers, of children and those of women had become a common sight and every minute news of these processions were coming from different parts of the city. There were so many lathi-charges; section 144 had been imposed but it was being defied everywhere and when people were asked as to why they were on strike and when would they give it up, the only reply made anywhere this question was asked, was that "we shall obey the orders that Master Abdullah might give in the situation after his release from jail."[1]

The strike continued for fifteen days. Muslim losses were estimated at twenty-five lac rupees on account of arson and plunder by the Army and Hindu mobs and another ten lacs on account of the suspension of business. The Government thereupon announced the appointment of a Commission consisting of three Judges of the High Court headed by Sir Barjor Dalal. Maulvi Mohammad Abdullah, Advocate, was nominated to represent Muslims but he declined the invitation so long as political prisoners were not released. The Government then nominated two Muslims, Khawaja Ghulam Ahmed Ashai and Khawaja Saad-ud-Din Shawl thinking perhaps that by doubling their representation, Muslims could be roped in but both sent in their resignations immediately, stating that so long as Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah and his colleagues were not released, it should not expect any cooperation from them. Despite the enquiry thus being a one-sided affair, some Christians and foreign visitors did appear to speak out the truth.

Mrs. Irwin, wife of Major H.R. Irwin, told the Middleton Commission that she saw a policeman enter the shop of a Muslim on the 27th of September. He was followed by armed soldiers, who gave a beating to the shop-keeper with their rifle butts. Father Eric Biscoe, Vice-Principal Mission High School, Srinagar, told the Commission that he saw prisoners brought from Shopian in a lorry being compelled to raise the slogans of "Maharaj ki Jai", and that they were being mercilessly beaten. He also told the Commission that during martial law, all means of communication and transport had been stopped. Lt. Col. Johnson, in a written statement to the Commission, said that four cavalry men mercilessly beat unarmed people; that when his wife intervened on

1 Kashmir Ka Gandhi, p. 55.

their behalf, she was insulted. He told the Commission that on 26th September at about 6.25 p.m. when they were returning from the Srinagar Club, they found that two civilians had been way-laid in front of the Llyods Bank building and soldiers were beating them mercilessly; that his wife ran for their rescue and requested the soldiers to stop beating but they insulted her; that in the meantime the car of the Prime Minister was sighted and he told him as to what had happened. He further told the Commission that the Prime Minister told him that the army was not under his control; that Miss Lodge also came by that time and all of them went to Brigadier Sutherland and complained to him; that they learnt from the Brigadier that the mounted soldiers belonged to the Palace Guard.

Another English visitor Miss Harrison Thompson told the Commission that a prisoner was being ruthlessly beaten and that she intervened and saved him with great difficulty.

Al-Fazal published the following statement of a non-Muslim lady in its issue, dated 18th August, 1931:

> "On the 15th of July at 10 a.m. I was attracted by the screams of women; I found a man who was crossing the bridge and inquired from him what the matter was. He told me that a man had died a natural death and that women were mourning him; within two minutes I heard firing from the direction of Mohallah Tashwan and soon afterwards saw soldiers coming from that side. I came out of my house alongwith my son. I saw that the soldiers pursued a boy who was standing on the bridge and eventually fired at him. He fell down between the shops of a baker and a butcher. My son ran to him for help, but one of the soldiers fired at my son also who escaped miraculously. In the meantime a water carrier was seen coming in front of us; he too was fired at and fell down; a third person who was passing by that side was also fired at and fell down; while he was still struggling with life, he was subjected to two more shots. All this happened in two to three minutes. I asked the soldiers as to who had permitted them to fire so indiscriminately and called upon them to show me a written order to that effect. They told me that they had the permission and retired. In the meantime some one came from the Nawan Kadal side on a bicycle; finding me in a state of harassment, he enquired from me as to what the matter was. I told him that indiscriminate firing had been resorted to in this Mohallah and that we were in danger and requested him to telephone the army; a military officer came some time later and heard the entire account from me."

The name of the lady is not given in the newspaper but it seems she was Mrs. Thakar Das, a Christian lady, who appeared before the Enquiry Commission.

THE QAZI FROM DELINA

While Srinagar city was thus going through the pangs of blood-shed, and an unprecedented wave of political demonstrations was sweeping through, the situation in the muffasils was no less grave. The important bridge at Sangham, forty five miles from Srinagar, which connects the two capitals on the vehicular road, was set on fire on 24th July; a few Dogra soldiers on duty sustained injuries. A number of peasants were arrested and collective fine amounting to rupees twenty thousand was imposed on the Muslim inhabitants of the locality.[1] It was actually blown up by a group of young terrorists headed by late Mirza Mehr Ali, of the State Police force. He later settled in Baramula and spoke to this writer of the incident. At Vichar Nag, there was a clash between a procession and a group of soldiers; some processionists snatched away the latter's rifles. Firing was resorted to, resulting in loss of life.

Baramula is a town thirty four miles from Srinagar on the Jhelum Valley road connecting Rawalpindi with Srinagar. It is the gateway to Kashmir valley. When news of the Srinagar happenings reached the district, there was wide-spread resentment. Pandit Balkak Dhar, S.D.M., with whom the reader is already acquainted, convened a meeting of the lambardars, Zaildars and other notables. Among the participants was Qazi Abdul Ghani of Delina, a semi-literate lambardar of nearly thirty five years age. After explaining the position to the audience, as Government saw it, the Pandit asked for their reaction towards the movement launched by Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah against the Maharaja. Expecting a reaffirmation of their loyalty to the ruler, in view of their being under his thumb, Dhar must have been rudely shocked when Qazi Abdul Ghani stood up to announce boldly that they shall judge his programme on merit and if they found that he was fighting for their rights, there should be no doubt in any quarter that they shall stand by him and suffer any hardships. As these words had emerged from the depths of his heart and were an eloquent tribute to the patriotism and sincerity of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, there went in the air a spontaneous cheer by those assembled in the compound. The Qazi was immediately arrested, put in a jute sack and given a severe beating from which he could not recover for a long time. But it goes to his credit that while being thus rolled, beaten and humiliated, he kept on repeating his support for the Movement. Ever afterwards, he ruled the hearts of

1 Inquilab, 6th August 1931.

his people who elected him a member of the Legislative Assembly despite his extreme poverty. While Abdul Ghani was thrown into prison, another young man from the town, Maulvi Ahmedullah, took up the reins of leadership. The method adopted was that volunteers or processionists, as the case was, went to the Jhelum Valley road and brought the traffic to a halt while holding placards detailing their grievances. As it was summer and the season for visitors, the halting of the traffic, even for an hour or so resulted in the gathering at the spot of scores of visitors from the plains, a great majority of whom were Englishmen or Europeans. The immense advantage of this pattern of agitation was that it reached the highest circles in the Government of India, who could no longer be hoodwinked by false reports from the local Government.

SHER-I-KASHMIR

Within a few days of his imprisonment, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah came to be known as "Sher-i-Kashmir" and anyone acquainted with Kashmir knows that the overwhelming majority of the people in the State know him only by this name. How he came to be known as "Sher-i-Kashmir" has been detailed earlier and how efforts were made by some elders from the community to build him up into his present stature may be briefly narrated here. In the politics of Eastern countries, the role of the individual is very important and a study of freedom movements in Afro-Asia would reveal that it is only with an extra-ordinary national leader, as pivot of a Movement, that a nation has succeeded either in its march for freedom or economic advancement. In Srinagar there were a few leaders of public opinion such as Khawaja Saad-ud-Din Shawl, Maulvi Mohammad Abdullah, Advocate, and Munshi Shahab-ud-Din who had not only the inherent good of their people at heart but also realised that unless someone was built up into a national leader, it was difficult to start a movement and, much more difficult, to sustain it. Themselves they were not only old but also possessed neither the stamina nor the requisite qualities of leadership which they envisaged for such a national leader. When Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah appeared on the scene and slowly but steadily rose in popular estimation, his sincerity of purpose and inherent qualities of leadership attracted their attention. They saw in him the man of the hour who alone, if properly supported, could create a national awakening among Kashmiris. So, after his arrest on 14th July, through the efforts of these leaders, the "Sher-i-Kashmir" slogan was taken up so spontaneously by the people that within a few weeks, the whole valley was resounding with it. This was not all. In subsequent public appearances, these and other elders of the community whom

people had known for their wisdom, scholarship, piety and self-respect, treated him, in the glare of watchful congregations, as a Saviour who possessed the powers of spiritualism and was capable of miracles. For instance, they would bow before him; someone would take out his shoes; another one would kiss his hands; yet another would touch his clothes and then raise his hands in prayer; while retreating from him, they would not turn their backs towards him. All this created a deep impression on the thousands of spectators and gave him an aura of holiness. Added to this manipulation, his moving recitation of the Holy Quran, his tall and imposing stature and the most important of all, his own sincerity and undaunted courage in being the first to have challenged the hated Dogra Rulers to a political battle, all helped to make him a Hero.

Kashmiris are traditionally a hero-worshipping race and it was only natural that a man of his pluck and courage and with such sincere manipulators around him, should have almost overnight touched the heights of fame. Then again, as usually happens, many a legend about him became current which though not true but were, nonetheless, believed by the general mass of people. One such story that gained wide currency was that Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah was thrown into a cauldron of burning oil but came out unhurt; that he told the Maharaja who was a witness, before jumping into the cauldron, that even if he were to die, there would be hundreds of Abdullahs to lead the Movement. Another story was that his name was inscribed on the leaves of cocoon trees. Actually what happened was that the leaves developed some disease that took the shape of two parallel lines which were interpreted to the people as "Sher-i-Kashmir". The educated class could not be duped in but then literacy among them was almost non-existent and it is a fact that whenever a literate Muslim told them that the lines did not read "Sher-i-Kashmir", he was laughed at by the illiterate groups around him who told him on his face that he was not literate enough to be able to read it! The story also entered the Maharaja's ivory tower and leaves were at once sent for to be personally examined by him.

The following incident was related to this writer by Haji Ahmedullah of Sopore: Soon after 1931, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah paid his first visit to Handwara. At a mass meeting attended by over forty thousand peasants, when Sufi Mohammad Akbar, later a member of the Indian Parliament rose to request him to address the meeting and had just said, "Now I request Hazrat Sher-i-Kashmir Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah..........", the audience spontaneously roared in deep reverence: صلى الله عليه وسلم

Kashmir shall always remember these Elders not for the stories they invented but for their sincerity in not only allowing but also enabling a

youngster to rise in the estimation of his people and assume the mantle of leadership. It is so because it is our sad experience almost all over the Muslim world, with a few exceptions, that our leadership can be aptly compared to shadeless growths in the countryside. These leaders unfortunately never realise that they cannot live for ever and must, by the laws of Nature, make room for a successor. They never build up their successors and in most cases almost everyone with promise is devoured as a possible source of challenge. It is not realised that trust begets trust and instances are rare when such lieutenants may have abused the confidence reposed in them by their leaders.

In Kashmir Valley we have a class of folk-singers who are popularly known as Ladi Shah. They resemble, in some of their habits, to gypsy tribes and earn their living by reciting popular ballads to street crowds. The instrument they use is called "trum trum". It consists of an iron rod about three feet in length with circular iron rings resembling bangles, about a dozen in number, around it. The "Ladi Shah" is very adept at the use of the instrument and creates serene and appealing music from it. The atrocities committed in Srinagar and elsewhere in the Valley were, as normally happens, the subject of many a popular ballad and folk-lore. It was Ladi Shah who carried the news of the movement together with the poets' usual exaggerations and the fables that had by then sprung up around the person of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, to every nook and corner of the Valley. For instance, the ballad that became immensely popular after 13th July, was composed by Mr. Ahmedullah Punjabi, a Kashmiri poet from Srinagar. One of its stanzas sang:

"Yim traye bandook shoran,
Tim riayth police sorun,
Thapa beye Maheshar,
Insaf aith wanan chha."

Trans:

Those who escaped the bullets, were arrested by the pigs, that the police is, personified by Thapa and Maheshar. Is this JUSTICE?

In the stanza, the poet has sarcastically commented on the Maharaja's announcement at the time of accession that Justice was his religion. It was a common sight to see a Ladi Shah seated on the third storey of purdah-observing houses in cities and towns, surrounded in a circle by tearful women, while he, almost unaware of

his surroundings, kept reciting these ballads from the very core of his heart. Most of the ballads had the following refrain line in each stanza:

"Kan thau, beh wanai Sher-i-Kashmir".

Trans:

Listen! I am going to unfurl the story of Sher-i-Kashmir.

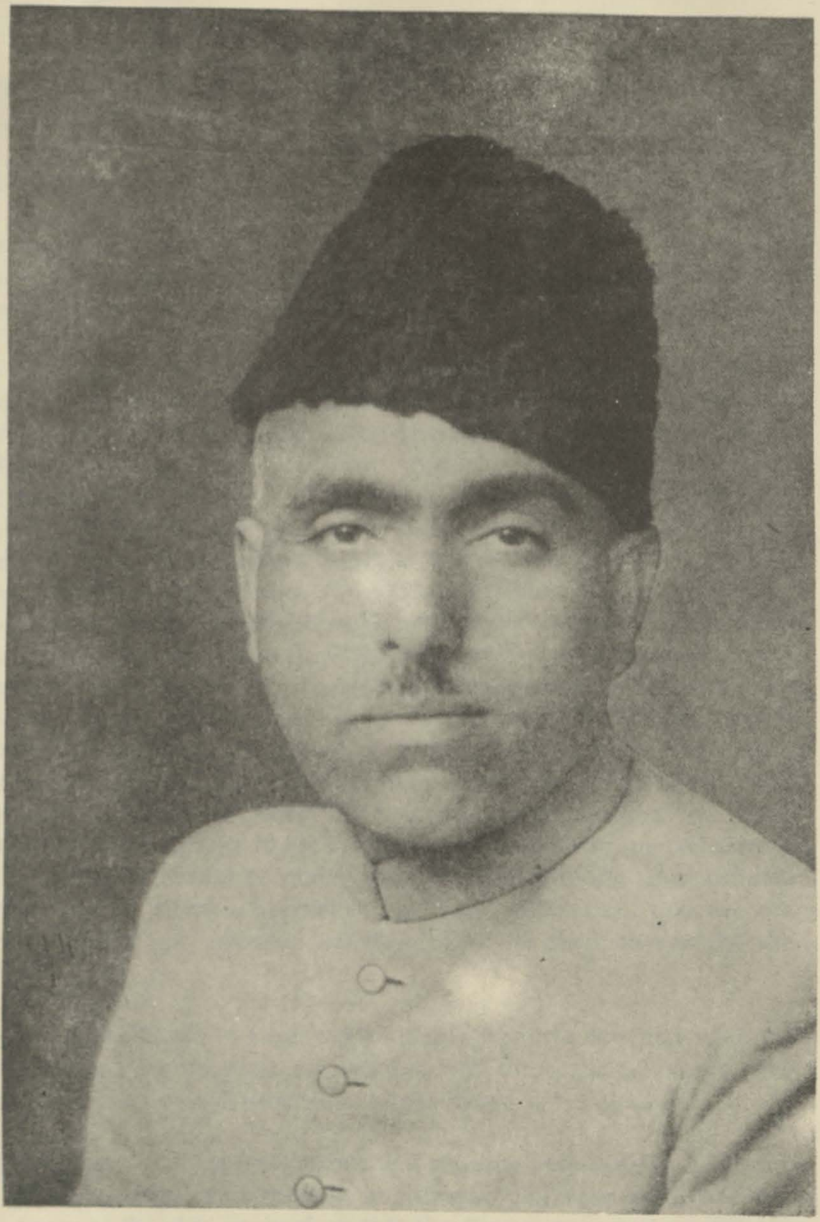
Says Pandit Prem Nath Bazaz, his bitterest critic who, as subsequent narration would show, damaged his image more than anybody else:

"By far the most important of all the Conference leaders is Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, the man who has been the chief hero of the Kashmir movement and has been primarily responsible for the politics of the State during several years in the past. It would be no exaggeration to say that Sheikh Abdullah is the National Conference. Many legends came to be woven round his personality when he was at the zenith of his fame. At one time he was the most respected man among the Muslims, who conferred on him the title of "The Lion of Kashmir". I have seen people kiss the hand that touched his body. He was often mobbed by his devotees and at times had a narrow escape on such occasions. No one, in the history of Kashmir, has enjoyed so much popularity with the masses as he."[1]

GOVERNMENT—OPPOSITION AGREEMENT

On 25th July, the Maharaja appointed Raja Hari Kishan Kaul, a Pandit civil servant, from outside the State, as Minister-in-Waiting and after a few days, when Mr. Wakefield was dismissed and had to leave the State in disgrace, as Prime Minister. Mr. Wakefield was accused of encouraging the agitation. It has been hotly denied both by Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah as well as Chaudhri Ghulam Abbas Khan. Actually it was Mr. Wattal who, on account of considerable influence in the Dogra hierarchy, succeeded, through intrigues, in persuading the Maharaja to believe that Wakefield was working against his interests. The truth is that Mr. Wakefield was one of the most seasoned British officers in the sub-continent, having already put in about forty-five years service, both in British as well as Indian India. A man of experience and foresight, he was the only well-wisher of the Maharaja among his advisers and sincerely desired a meeting ground between the ruler and the ruled. The Maharaja was ill-advised to terminate his

1 Kashmir Ka Gandhi, p. 60.



SHER-I-KASHMIR

services and force him out in disgrace because, the situation worsened after his departure.

Hari Kishan Kaul, being a Pandit, could have no political pull with the Muslims and even if he had been sincere in his efforts to find out a solution of the problems facing the Government which he certainly was not, Muslims were bound to treat him with suspicion. It is said that he had undertaken to suppress the Movement within three months; he had the full support of the Maharaja as also of the entire Hindu community. The army had by now been despatched to all the towns and given control of the civil administration. Almost every bridge and Government building was guarded.

Hari Kishan Kaul started with an effort to win over such Muslims who were considered socially important but realised soon that they had lost their influence and were of no avail. The popular mood was so defiant that they would have been lynched by angry mobs if they had openly acted against the interests of the people. The realisation thus dawned that the key to peace lay in the hands of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah alone. He, therefore, deputed Khawaja Noor Shah Naqshbandi, Khwaja Ghulam Ahmed Ashai, Mir Waiz Yusuf Shah, Maulvi Mohammad Abdullah, Advocate, and Pandit Rughnath Mattu, Tehsildar, to the State prisoners in the fort and conveyed the readiness of the Government to release them forthwith provided they undertook not to make any speeches against it. According to Pandit Prem Nath Bazaz, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah straight-away turned down the offer and said, "We have never indulged in any unconstitutional activity nor do we have any intention to do so. We only want that justice be done to the Muslims and their rights as citizens of the country, be restored to them. If it is unlawful to make these demands through constitutional methods or to launch a movement for their restoration, then we are certainly guilty of unlawful activities and we shall always do the same".

The duplicity of Mr. Kaul may be judged from the fact that while on the one hand he initiated negotiations with the prisoners, at the same time the following royal proclamation was issued at his instance:

> "Whereas a few bad characters and goondas have committed acts of plunder, arson and murder in Srinagar and have disturbed the peace of the city, so much so that the Government had to seek the assistance of the army to stop such acts, and whereas information has been received from villages that these goondas are indulging in the same acts there, the Maharaja Bahadur hereby advises

his subjects who are by nature peaceful, to stay away from disturbances, and live like peaceful citizens as they have been living so far. The Government takes this opportunity to warn them that it is adopting measures to punish those responsible for the previous incidents and prevent repetition of the same in future. The Government hereby pledges to take stern measures against the law-breakers."[1]

The proclamation failed to impress anyone, least of all the Muslims. On the contrary, it was clearly provocative because it had described political leaders and workers as goondas and law-breakers and had threatened stern action against them. Meanwhile, the strike continued; processions, meetings and demonstrations also continued unabated. In fact the proclamation intensified them. When the Government realised that it cannot win over the prisoners nor suppress the popular revolt, it again offered to release them if they undertook, even nominally, not to indulge in unconstitutional activities. Consequently, the prisoners were released on 1st August. Although no problem had been solved nor had the grievances been redressed even partially, the release of political leaders was doubtlessly a great victory for the Movement because apart from showing the inability of the Government to suppress the mass movement, it had also demonstrated to the people what magic their unity and sacrifice could mean. Addressing his first post-release meeting, on 2nd August held in the Jamia Masjid, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah said:—

"Muslims have inherited it from their ancestors that they should face hardships with patience. The blood shed by the martyrs has cemented the foundations of our Movement. We are loyal to the Maharaja and do not want to put him to unnecessary trouble but let there be no doubt that we shall never be faltering in voicing our demands even if it leads us to the gallows."[2]

The Government issued a press note, published in daily Tribune dated 3rd August, 1931, explaining the release of the leaders. As usual, the tone was provocative which did not help in bringing about any improvement in the situation. Before their release, the leaders had told the Government that unless their demands were accepted, there was no use in releasing them. The Government had thereupon requested them to accept their release and present a memorandum of their grievances to the Maharaja on 6th August. On 3rd August the leaders informed the Government that they had not been able to prepare the draft and sought a brief post-

1 Kashmir Ka Gandhi, p. 60-61.
2 *Ibid.* p. 64.

ponement. Therefore, the date was extended to the 10th of August; meanwhile the Government continued its repressive policy. All emergency laws that had been enforced in July continued to remain in force; the curfew was not withdrawn; section 144 continued to be clamped down. Hundreds of political workers continued to be detained and scores of Muslim civil servants who had been suspended on charges of complicity in the movement also continued to remain suspended. It was, therefore, obvious that the Government had failed to create a favourable climate for the Muslim leaders to call on His Highness and present a memorandum. So they informed the Government that unless it was prepared to prove its bonafides by the withdrawal of emergency laws, the release of all political workers and the withdrawal of suspension orders against its Muslim employees, no useful purpose could be served by their meeting with the Maharaja or the submission of a memorandum.

In response to an appeal issued by the All India Kashmir Committee, Kashmir Day was observed all over the State on 14th August, 1931. A complete hartal was observed, and processions were taken out which terminated in public meetings. In Srinagar there was a complete hartal. A mass meeting of women was held at Mazar-i-Shuhada which was attended by about thirty thousand women. It was addressed by Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, Chaudhri Ghulam Abbas Khan and Mistri Yaqub Ali. It was followed by another mass meeting at Jamia Masjid. The orphaned children of the martyrs had been specially brought to the meeting and seated on the dais. They aged from six months to three years. When their identity was disclosed, the audience burst into tears and cries of anguish rented the air. It was after fifteen to twenty minutes that calm prevailed. At the end of the meeting, the blood-stained clothes of the martyrs were displayed to the audience. Loud cries of anguish again rose in the air and it was with these feelings that the meeting dispersed. Some of these clothes were later secretly taken to Sialkot where they were exhibited in a public meeting attended by over a lac of people and addressed by Mirza Bashirud-Din Mahmud and Maulana Ataullah Shah Bukhari.

The Maharaja's Government issued a press note which was published in the Lahore press claiming that the call for a Hartal on 14th August received no response in Srinagar. Like other statements of the type, it was wholly untrue and in this connection we have the evidence of Lady Nethersole who was in Srinagar and whose contradiction was published in the Civil and Military Gazette of 22nd August, 1931. The letter is reproduced below:

"Sir, In your paper of the 16th, under the heading "Kashmir Day in

Srinagar", is the telegram sent by the Publicity Officer which is absolutely untrue.

There was complete hartal here on Kashmir Day from dawn of 14th to dawn of 15th instant. Not one Muslim shop open anywhere. No tongas even. No boats, save for those going to Masjids for prayers and supplication. I myself went everywhere—saw everything.

The Muslim cause is hard enough, God knows in this most distressful country, with deliberate and damaging lies being broadcast to their detriment. I enclose my card."[1]

Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, therefore, felt free to continue with his political agitation and started a mass campaign. The Maharaja then invited Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad. Sir Sapru was himself a Kashmiri Pandit whose forefathers had migrated from the State and settled in Allahabad. He was an Adviser of the Maharaja, of course, without any official designation. His leanings towards Congress were too well known. Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah and some of his colleagues had detailed discussions with the Maulana who advised them to present their grievances to the Maharaja. Therefore, on 15th August, the Muslim representatives met the Maharaja but instead of a memorandum, they presented a short address wherein, after reiterating their loyalty, they demanded the removal of Hari Kishan Kaul but the Maharaja immediately replied that he had complete faith in Kaul and that he had no intention of getting him replaced. The meeting, therefore, instead of bringing any understanding, caused further estrangement. So the mass campaign already in full swing continued unabated. When Hari Kishan Kaul found that there was no other way out, he invited to Srinagar one of his friends, Sir Mehr Shah of Punjab. On his arrival, a meeting took place at the residence of the Prime Minister between the Muslim representatives and the Prime Minister. As a result of lengthy discussions, an agreement was worked out and signed by the parties; it was also signed by Sir Mehr Shah as a witness. As per terms of the agreement, the Government undertook that:—

1. As soon as the agitation was called off, all emergency regulations and orders in force since two months, would be suspended.

2. The High Court would be requested to release on bail all those who stood accused of rioting as well as those who were already on trial.

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1 C.M.G., dated 22-8-1931.

3. The hearing in these cases shall remain suspended until the publication of the Dalal Riot Inquiry Commission report.

4. All such government servants who had been dismissed or suspended or degraded on charges of complicity in the Movement, shall be restored to their posts provided they gave an assurance that in future, they will not take part in the agitation.[1]

The Muslim representatives, on their part, undertook that:

1. The agitation was to be suspended which was explained to mean that no speeches aimed at creating hatred against the Government or the Maharaja or any other community, would be made.

2. It was to be announced in the Jamia Masjid and other mosques that Muslim nationals of the State did not take inspiration from any outside elements and that while being loyal to the Maharaja, they hoped that he would sympathetically consider their grievances.

3. They would appeal to their sympathisers (outside the State) that so long as the Government did not take a decision on the memorandum that they were about to present, no steps likely to affect the political climate, may kindly be taken.

4. The normal laws of the country would not be affected by the agreement.[2]

What happened in Srinagar city soon after the firing incident at the Central jail and the promulgation of Martial Law, can better be described by quoting from the memorandum that was later presented to the Maharaja:

"Some constables of the Training school who were coming towards the city in a lorry, attacked innocent and peaceful Muslim passers-by inflicting death on some and injuries on some others......one or two severely injured persons were being removed from the Central jail to a private hospital of Doctor Abdul Wahid and were attacked in the way; the injured were also beaten and succumbed to their injuries ......With the promulgation of Martial Law, army wrought havoc on the Muslims on the instigation of Hindus; the passers-by were

1&2 Kashmir Ka Gandhi, p. 70&71.

murdered; peaceful citizens were forcibly brought out of their homes and tortured and arrested; nothing was left undone to disgrace, dishonour and destroy Muslim homes; women were assaulted and outraged; small children were not only beaten but also killed so much so that the statement of a non-Muslim woman throws considerable light on these incidents. Wherever it was possible, poor men and women were either drowned or strangulated; the dead bodies of the martyrs are still being recovered from the river. In Maharaj Ganj and Bohri Kadal conditions were so bad that for three days Muslim residents remained besieged in their homes without any means of subsistance. The havoc wrought between Habba Kadal and Safa Kadal is beyond description. Hindus served food and other delicious eatables to the army to keep them under their influence; in Maharaj Ganj, Domba Kadal, Nawab Bazar, Bateyar and Vichar Nag, many innocent Muslims were killed by the army in collaboration with local Hindus. Law and order did not exist even in its shadow nor did the officers care for the norms of laws and justice; they acted like bigoted Hindus who seemed to have taken a vow to perpetrate oppression. Although processions were banned, the Congress workers took out a procession illegally, yet no action was taken against them."

Looking at the understanding, now from the year 1977, one can easily conclude that it was of no great use and the Muslim representatives may well have declined to be a party to it but things have to be judged in their historical perspective. It seems that the agreement was not after all as bad in the year 1931 as it now seems to be, when the British intervention on the side of the Maharaja stood assured under treaty obligations. Apart from giving immediate relief to hundreds of political workers and binding the Government to accept the humiliating position of taking back into its service scores of its employees, who, in violation of service rules, participated in the Movement which by itself was a recognition of its strength and the importance that these youth, unknown a year ago, had assumed on the national level, it gave them a breathing space to prepare themselves for a second round of clash with the Government. Political movements for reforms are not like a battle in the conventional sense where the fate of one or the other party is finally decided in a single combat. It is a long drawn-out battle where there are many an encounter. Having thus undoubtedly emerged stronger from the first encounter than they were at any time before, they now began to prepare themselves for the second round.

However, the popular mood in the cities of Srinagar and Jammu was uncompromising and defiant. There were elements also at work, as they everywhere are, in league with the Government who wanted to sabotage

the Movement and destroy the growing national leadership. They were very active and interpreted the compromise as a betrayal of the people and a demonstration of weakness. Some even said that they had been bought over. The compromise was signed on 26th August and on the same evening a crowd attacked the house of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah and shattered its windows while he was away. On the 27th a public meeting was held at Jamia Masjid which attracted almost the entire male population of the city. Mir Waiz Mohammad Yusuf Shah and Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah explained their position and told them that it was in the interests of the people that the offer, inviting grievances in writing for consideration by the Maharaja, should have been accepted and the Government given an opportunity of redressing them. The meeting was also attended by Sheikh Din Mohammad, a leading Advocate of Gujranwala who later became a Judge of the Lahore High Court. The pact also sent a wave of discontent among the Muslims of Jammu city. Chaudhri Ghulam Abbas had to rush from Srinagar and explain the position in a public meeting.

KASHMIRIS SET UP A WAR COUNCIL

In a few days, tension again returned to the scene because the Government failed to reinstate some of its employees who had been earlier dismissed or suspended. Interpreted as a breach of faith, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah resumed its severe criticism. A memorandum had in the meantime been drafted. The initial draft was perhaps prepared by Khawaja Ghulam Ahmad Ashai. After its approval by the local leadership, it was carried to Lahore by Maulvi Abdur Rahim to be shown to the All India Kashmir Committee which had been formed soon after the 13th July firing. A detailed account of the activities of the Committee and the invaluable support received by the Movement from Muslims of India in general and those of Punjab in particular needs a separate chapter and will, therefore, be taken up separately.

While Maulvi Abdur Rahim was away in Lahore and the memorandum was under scrutiny with the All India Kashmir Committee, the Government struck again and arrested Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah on 21st September. He had been earlier officially informed that it would make a definite reply on the same day. He and Mir Waiz Yusuf Shah were both summoned to the residence of the Prime Minister, Kaul. Senior officers were already present. Strangely enough, the Prime Minister immediately began by hurling abuses on Sheikh Abdullah. "You are a big Badmash! You don't give up your mischievous activities", said he. There was great tension. Sheikh Abdullah protested against this insulting attitude in strong and firm words; this made the Premier

almost mad; he continued, "You are talking non-sense. We will teach your people a lesson because you do not give up your mean activities". Sheikh Abdullah retorted by telling him, "......your plans will surely destroy the foundations of this State. Kashmir Durbar has been subjecting us to oppression and injustice for too long. I do not like the repetition of incidents that have already taken place (Muslim killings) but I must tell you that it will result in very serious consequences for the Government if it again seeks to shed the blood of Muslims......".[1]

It was perhaps too much for the haughty Premier who considered himself a "Strong hand" and had undertaken to suppress the Movement within three months. He, therefore, made a show of force, interrupted Sheikh Abdullah and told him, while burning with rage:

> "You are a mean fellow. I order your arrest here and now and I will see what grief you and your community can cause me or the Government".[2]

He was removed again to the Badamibagh cantonment. According to Mr. Bazaz:—

> "The arrest of Sheikh Abdullah this time was entirely different from his earlier arrest because while at that time he was simply Master Abdullah, he had by now become Sher-i-Kashmir with the result that as soon as the news of his arrest became known, Muslims immediately suspended their business and huge crowds from all over the city began converging towards Jamia Masjid."[3]

A public meeting was held and a War Council announced! The fact that the Committee now formed to carry on the agitation was named "War Council" is of significance as it showed the defiant and emboldened mood of the dumb driven Kashmiris. That a people, who just a few months before, stood condemned as cowards, should now be talking publicly in terms of a war with their ruler, showed unmistakably not only the success of the mass agitation but also how deeply it had stirred them. Mufti Jalal-ud-Din was appointed first dictator of the Council. He was succeeded by Bakhshi Ghulam Mohammad, whose arrest was followed by a succession of scores of other volunteers. Processions became a common sight; business remained suspended and every evening thousands of Muslims used to gather either at Jamia Masjid or Khanqah-i-Mualla, as directed on the previous evening, where volunteers offered themselves for arrest after making highly anti-Government speeches.

1&2 Taseer, p. 123.
3 Kashmir Ka Gandhi, p. 74.

On 22nd September people again collected in the Jamia Masjid and came out in a procession. The army mishandled the situation and instead of allowing them to take out a peaceful procession, barricaded their route. In such situations, prohibition always provokes the mob and brings forth defiance of authority. This is what happened. The army fired certain rounds not because it was attacked but simply because people had defied the ban on processions. Three men were killed on the spot and more than a dozen injured. On the same day the military also opened fire on another procession at Maisuma which included women, killing two men and wounding three, including a woman. On 23rd September, about forty thousand men and women again collected in the Jamia Masjid for the purpose of giving their dead heroes a befitting burial. A serious clash would have certainly taken place but for the timely arrival of Nawab Khusro Jang, Minister-in-Waiting, who brought a written order from the Prime Minister giving permission for a procession. It remained peaceful and the martyrs were buried at the same place where the martyrs of 13th July had been laid to rest.

Those killed at the Jamia Masjid were:

1. Nasir-ud-Din, aged 22 years, of Chankral Mohalla.

2. Ghulam Rasool Kakroo, aged 28 years, of Chinar Bagh.

3. Assadullah Gilkar, aged 20 years, of Nar Paristan.

An eye witness account given by the correspondent of daily Al-Fazal, dated the 29th of September, 1931, is reproduced below:—

> "Sheikh Abdullah and his Lt. Maulana Jalal-ud-Din were arrested on 21st. The Muslims kept awake all through the night on account of the depth of shock. With the out-break of dawn, they started gathering at Jamia Masjid. At 8-15 a.m. the army appeared on the scene and took up position on the eastern side which is at some height. At 9 a.m. the army and the police surrounded the Mosque but the arrival of people continued unabated and about 25 thousands had gathered by 9.10 a.m. when 40 cavalry men appeared at the main gate; all other gates were closed. The mounted cavalry charged their beasts on the hundreds of Muslims who were outside the Mosque and when they ran for safety towards the prayer hall, the army opened fire killing four and wounding hundreds, fifteen of whom had serious injuries.......

At 12 a.m. women and children took out a joint procession near Gau Kadal. They were lathi-charged by the police and mounted soldiers caused them injuries with their spears. Armed police then opened fire killing eight men. The dead bodies were seized by the army and only one of them was later handed over to Muslims.......

Curfew was clamped down at 9 a.m. On 23rd, a Mussalman who was asleep on his shop, at Habakadal, was shot dead."[1]

On the 27th Ramazan, while the usual protest meeting was in progress in the Khanqah-i-Mualla, Maulvi Mohammad Saeed, then Arabic teacher in the S. P. High School and a resident of Karnah, Muzaffarabad district, appeared on the stage and announcing his resignation from service, offered himself for arrest. The Magistrate on duty Khawaja Salam Shah, Assistant Governor, after blocking most of the exits, ordered the police to take as many prisoners as they could lay their hands on. Consequently hundreds were arrested though most of them were released after being 'straightened' in the thanas. Seventy five persons were summarily tried and sentenced to three months rigorous imprisonment and a fine of rupees ten each. Among them was Mr. Ghulam Rasool Arif, Editor weekly "Hamdard". Another case under section 332/353, Penal Code (assaulting Government servants while performing official duties) was registered against him and sixteen others as some officers had, in the scuffle, received injuries but the case was later withdrawn. On 23rd September, warrants for the arrest of Khawaja Saad-ud-Din Shawl and Khawaja Ghulam Ahmed Ashai were issued. Mr. Ashai was arrested at midnight but Mr. Shawl could not be traced.

WOMEN MARTYRS AND NARCHHOO PALTAN

In Kashmir valley, women also made a notable contribution to the Movement. Such enthusiasm was really not expected of them. In Shopian, Mst. Sajida Bano, aged 25 years, who had recently lost her husband, received a bullet wound in military firing. She was pregnant and died alongwith the child on the spot. The second woman to die was Mst. Jan Begum, widow of Abel Lone, aged 35 years, resident of Khawajapura in the locality of Nowshera, Srinagar, who was killed in a police firing. The third martyr was Mst. Freechi (فریزی), widow of Khawaja Razaq Joo Bohru, resident of Mohallah Jalal Sahib, Baramula, who died of a bullet wound received in a military firing. She hurled a kangri on the

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1 Al-Fazal, 29th Sep. 1931.

face of a police officer in course of a procession of women which disfigured him permanently. The fourth woman to die was Mst. Fazli, who was killed on 24th September, 1931, when the military opened fire on a procession of women which was parading the Maisuma Bazar, Srinagar. Unprecedented and unexampled in the history of British India!

Processions of women were a common feature of the agitation in various localities of Srinagar and the towns of Baramula, Sopore, Islamabad and Shopian. Fire brigades were frequently employed to disperse them. It goes to the credit of the daughters of the Valley that although illiterate and unaware even of their social rights and traditionally confined to their homes, they braved hardships smilingly and fought shoulder to shoulder with their men-folk for the emancipation of their country from Dogra rule. It has already come on record that some of them were arrested and had to undergo imprisonment.

Mir Waiz Mohammad Yusuf Shah proclaimed a Jehad as the only answer to meet the extreme repression perpetrated by the authorities and their trigger-happy soldiers. This Fatwa of religious obligation to take up arms against the Government was supported by other religious divines, who were known for their sectarian disagreements with the Mir Waiz. The Muslims who were already tired of peaceful demonstrations against a callous and morally depraved administration, welcomed the announcement. Consequently on the 24th September, 1931, all able-bodied Muslims from Srinagar and its immediate neighbourhood were seen surging towards Khanyar, in groups, armed with axes, spears, lances and even a few match-lock rifles. Syed Mirak Shah Kashani, another religious divine, known for his piety and scholarship, came out of his seclusion in Shalimar and marched on horseback with a naked sword in his hand at the head of thousands of ill-armed followers. From Batamalinu, Khawaja Ahmedullah started with a thousand men, similarly armed. Within a few hours, about sixty thousand Muslims gathered at Khanyar which houses one of the most sacred shrines in the State. A clash with the army was expected any moment and it was, in fact, for this purpose that such a large number of people had collected with whatever arms they could lay their hands on. The main weapon with them was "narchhoo". It resembles a long spear with the only difference that sometimes its extreme edge, instead of being made of a single sharp blade, consists of five blades, resembling a hand. It is used for the catching of fish. It is for this reason that the gathering has gone down in history as 'narchhoo paltan.' For a few hours, some of them even held a training camp in the adjoining large garden of Khawaja Saad-ud-Din Shawl where they were taught how to snatch away rifles from the soldiers. The Government managed to take

photographs of the crowd which were shown to Hari Singh, and it was wisely decided to withdraw all troops and armed constables from all parts of the city. Had this not been done, there is little doubt that hundreds of people would have died as a result of a determined show down. The Maharaja sent Nawab Khusro Jang, Sahibzada Noor-ud-Din, Khawaja Salam Shah and Brigadier Sutherland, to calm down the highly excited mob and invite them to send immediately a deputation to represent their grievances. They succeeded in persuading the mob to remain peaceful and send a deputation. Khawaja Saad-ud-Din Shawl, Mir Waiz Mohammad Yusuf Shah, Mir Waiz Hamdani, Maulvi Mohammad Abdullah, Advocate, and Agha Saeed Hussain Jalali were present on the spot. At a hurriedly-held meeting, it was decided to send Mir Waiz Mohammad Yusuf Shah, Saad-ud-Din Shawl and Maulvi Mohammad Abdullah. When they went to the palace, they were made to sit and wait for two hours before being ushered in to the presence of the proud ruler. He was bareheaded and without even answering their formal salutation, harangued in chaste Kashmiri with a loaded pistol in his hand:

> "Have you started a revolt? Do you want to start a war against my Government? Listen! If I wish I can skin you alive right now in my presence and there is no one to prevent me or ask for my explanation, but as I had proclaimed at the time of accession that Justice is my religion, therefore, in deference to my commitment, I forgive you. I am fully alive to the difficulties of my subjects; they are like my children. I will enquire into their grievances myself without any pressure and will redress these but I wouldn't allow anyone to instigate my subjects to rebellion. I shall shoot such persons one by one. Go and tell those people who are assembled at Khanyar to return to their homes. Such persons who are instigating a rebellion against my Government will receive such examplary punishment that no one shall thereafter have the courage to raise his fingers."[1]

Mir Waiz Mohammad Yusuf Shah wanted to interrupt and say something but Sutherland "requested" the Maharaja to grant him "permission" for two hours only so that he could annihilate not only the deputationists but also their supporters. Nawab Khusro Jang then 'reminded' the Maharaja that he had brought them on the explicit understanding that they will represent their grievances and that among them was also Mir Waiz, the religious head of the State Muslims. It was then "agreed" that the deputationists will return to Khanyar immediately and

1 Taseer, p. 135.

after dispersing them, bring about a peaceful climate, conducive for the presentation of their grievances to the Maharaja. When they returned back, they did not tell the great mass of humanity as to what had actually happened and how they had been abused and threatened by the haughty ruler. They just told them that the Maharaja had agreed to receive a memorandum containing their grievances and promised to redress them. They, therefore, appealed to them to disperse and return to their homes peacefully. It is not known as to whether these leaders withheld the information out of fear for the Maharaja or because they considered it inexpedient to further excite an already excited mob by telling them that the Maharaja had insulted their representatives and that the officers on whose assurance and invitation they had been sent to the palace, had actually abused the confidence that had been reposed in their word of honour. However, there is no doubt that withholding of the information was expedient and wise because if the mob had known what actually happened in the palace, no leader may have been able to prevent them from resorting to violence. Being ill-equipped and ill-armed, the great majority of them were either wholly unarmed or were carrying merely sticks, the army and the armed police, armed with deadly weapons, could have easily repulsed their attack and at the same time, left hundreds of them in a pool of blood. According to the Government version, the mob carried three hundred rifles.[1] This, no doubt, is an exaggeration.

Next morning, a military display was held in the city. All available soldiers with their rifles, bayonets and machine-guns staged a march past. A big State flag which consisted of red and yellow colours was carried at the head and every Mussalman passer-by was compelled to salute it and raise the slogan of Maharaja Bahadur Ki Jai. Those declining, were arrested and summarily sentenced to various terms of imprisonment. Hundreds were subjected to whipping. Four whipping centres were opened in Srinagar at the Central jail, the Maharaj Ganj police station, Thana Kothi Bagh and the exhibition grounds Batamalinu. Khawaja Ghulam Mohi-ud-Din Hamdani, Haji Mohammad Subhan, Sadar-ud-Din Mujahid, Qureshi Mohammad Yusuf and Ghulam Mohammad Bande, all of whom later achieved prominence in the Liberation movement, also were sentenced to public whipping.

On the 24th September, the Government promulgated another emergency legislation called Notification No. 19-L of 1988. It was drafted on the lines of the Burma Ordinance of 1818. It was first enforced in Srinagar alone but was subsequently extended, by separate Notifications, to the city

1 Kashmir Ka Gandhi, p. 75.

of Jammu and the towns of Anantnag, Sarnal, Mattan, Bijbihara, Pulwama, Baramula and Sopore. It defined as "turbulent person" a person who had committed an offence punishable under sections 121, 121-A, 122 or 123 of the Penal Code or "against whom operations are being carried out by any military force or the police for the purpose of restoring and maintaining law and order in any area". It empowered any competent authority under the Act to arrest without warrant any person against whom a reasonable suspicion existed that he had promoted or assisted to promote or who *intended to promote* dis-affection against the authority of the Government or that he had acted or *intended to act* in a manner prejudicial to the restoration or maintenance of law and order. The authority was also empowered to "order any person that he shall not enter, reside or remain or shall remove himself from and shall not return to any area specified in the order, or shall conduct himself in such manner, abstain from such acts or take such orders with any property in his possession or under his control as may be specified in the order". Any person could be appointed as a special Police officer. The Government or its agency could take possession of any land or building; even the movable property of any one could be confiscated. In short, unlimited powers were conferred on the military, police and persons from the civil administration regardless of the rights of individuals. Non-compliance with the order was made punishable with imprisonment extending to three years or with whipping not exceeding thirty stripes or fine extending up to Rs. 1000/-. Collective fine could also be imposed. Even the spread of rumours "whether by words spoken or written or by sign or by visible or audible representation or otherwise" was made punishable with imprisonment extending to one year or by flogging or fine extending up to Rs. 1000/-. Similarly offences under sections 121, 121-A, 122, 123, 152-A, 160, 186, 187, 188, 189, 227, 505, 506, 507 and 508 Penal Code or under section 17 of the Criminal Law Amendment Act of 1971 Bikrami were made cognizable and non-bailable.

The misbehaviour of the troops has been described by Mr. Bazaz in the following words:—

> "They gave full play to their racial animosity and religious perversity when dealing with the Muslims. Although the Ailan enjoining people to stand up and salute all military officers, high and low, passing through the streets, was not issued, yet the military men carried it into effect and people were harassed everywhere on this account. Men were dragged from their shops and even houses on mere pretences and severely beaten; the contents of their shops were looted. Some Europeans have recorded their evidence that this was being done

entirely unprovoked. Brigadier Sutherland had to arrest several Military men when this wanton aggression went to extremes."[1]

"The flogging centre was the Exhibition ground which is on the road side near Amirakadal in the city. The civilised Government officials would not cover the place while flogging a poor wretch who was exposed to the full gaze of the passer-by, strip naked of all his clothes. One hundred respectable and grown up men were sentenced to flogging and in several cases it was severe as no less than thirty stripes were administered on their bodies."[2]

Even Mr. Middleton had to admit:—

"The summary trials which were conducted were necessarily based mainly on information supplied by the police or the troops. It was unlikely that non-official Mohammadans would come forward to give evidence against each other and I feel quite certain that non-official Hindus would fear to do so during the continuance of the excitement and ill-feelings which followed the disturbances. In these circumstances there was a rich field for dishonest minor officials to exploit and it would be surprising if no bribery had occurred. The cases mentioned in evidence are allegations not proved but I have no doubt that they are based on facts."[3]

THE KILLINGS CONTINUE

As seen above, the Movement had already spread to the muffasils where people gave up their normal vocations and a large number were thrown behind bars; but as yet no incident of firing had taken place anywhere outside the city except in Shopian. On 23rd September, the Muslims of Islamabad observed a complete hartal to register their protest against the arrest of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah and in support of their demands. A huge procession was taken out which was stopped by the military. The processionists resented obstruction and demanded passage, which being refused, brought about a serious clash. According to an official press note, the mob hurled stones on the army which led to the firing but eye-witnesses insisted, that stoning was resorted to in retaliation for the firing. Twenty-five Muslims, including a child aged 13 years, lay dead on the

1 Inside Kashmir, p. 151.
2 Inside Kashmir, p. 152.
3 Enquiry Report.

spot and about one hundred and fifty were wounded, some, very seriously.[1] The names of 21 victims are given below:—

1.	Razaq Ahangar	..	55 years
2.	Ghulam Ahmed Malik	..	50 years
3.	Gani Butt Kawa	..	35 years
4.	Gani Darzi	..	35 years
5.	Rehman Malik	..	60 years
6.	Pir Mohammad Maqbool Shah	..	40 years
7.	Aziz Sufi alias Ali Waza	..	50 years
8.	Kabir Shah Azad	..	50 years
9.	Pir Gani Shah	..	40 years
10.	Habib Wani	..	30 years
11.	Mohammad Posh	..	22 years
12.	Ghulam Hussain Malik	..	13 years
13.	Ghulam Ahmad Zev	..	36 years
14.	Jamal Vigy	..	25 years
15.	Ghulam Rasool Sheikh	..	28 years
16.	Juma Wani	..	19 years
17.	Subhan Wani	..	30 years
18.	Mohammad Butt Chikan	..	30 years
19.	Ramazan Butt	..	20 years
20.	Ali Mohammad Rishi	..	25 years
21.	Abdul Ahad Mir	..	60 years

The Martial Law Regulation No. 19-L had introduced whipping as a mode of punishment. The jails had not only been speedily filled in but even the maximum space available in police stations, had been exhausted. The fear of jails had completely disappeared. Hundreds of men of all ages were coming forward everywhere to court arrest and to have the satisfaction of having made their contribution to the cause of freedom. At the same time, it also enhanced their prestige in the eyes of the community. It was a common sight those days in the length and breadth of

1 Taseer, p. 394.



ہم تمہاری ہی طرح کودے تھے اس طوفان میں
جان کی بازی لگا دی ہم نے اس طوفان میں

Kashmir valley to hear volunteers chanting epic poems and marching towards jails to offer themselves for arrest. The flogging took place at the most conspicuous place in the towns and inside the thanas in the city. The punishment was inflicted publicly. The victim was undressed in order to make his buttocks available for the blows, with his hands, legs and waist tightly tied to a pole. Some of them received as many as thirty stripes in a single session, different sentences having been awarded under different sections. In ninety percent cases the victim bleeded profusely and in many cases they fainted. A few died as a result of the injuries received or the shock undergone. Among them was Maulvi Ahmedullah, the leader of the Movement in Baramula town, who received as many as thirty stripes, was unable to regain his health and died a few weeks later. Among other martyrs, the names that have survived neglect and forgetfulness are:—

1. Ghulam Mohammad Butt, aged 25 years, resident of Srinagar. He died in Kothi Bagh thana in course of whipping.

2. Ahmed Butt, aged 30 years, who died in Central jail Srinagar, also in course of whipping.

In Shopian, another town in Islamabad district, a Muslim faqir was arrested on 23rd September for shouting slogans considered seditious by the authorities. Next day he was placed on trial before a Hindu Munsif. On Friday, the 26th of September, thousands of Muslims who had gathered in the Jamia Masjid for prayers, condemned his arrest and demanded his release. Resolutions were also passed criticising the Government for the arrest of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah and his colleagues. After the meeting, a procession was taken out. The same Munsif, acting as the Magistrate on duty, ordered the troops to open fire. Some demonstrators were injured. After a few moments, the people regrouped again and continued the procession. At some distance it was fired at again. Some people were again injured. The mob, therefore, became violent and seized a police Head constable who was beaten to death on the spot; the police station was also attacked. Firing was again resorted to, further injuring some persons. Further army reinforcements were sent from Srinagar and what happened next may better be described in the words of Pandit Bazaz:—

"During the period of the military control, the tale of excesses which I have described while writing about the Srinagar disturbances was repeated. The police had ample reason to torture the Muslims as one of their members had been murdered. Military men helped them to take their revenge on the poor, defenceless and unarmed people.

From all accounts, official and non-official, it can easily be gathered that there was no law in the town. A large number of people left the place or went into hiding. Those who remained behind had to attend the identification parades as the police was busy in investigating the cases of the riot and the murder of the police official. While the villagers were thus engaged with the police, the chivalrous Rajput soldiers would roam about the town, enter their houses, loot them and abuse their women folk. Several cases of rape were reported to Mr. Middleton who himself admits grave suspicion about one having actually taken place. Shopkeepers were first ordered to open their shops and were then arrested and taken to the thana for investigation. In their absence the shops were looted. Every torture against Muslims was perpetrated. People were beaten on the slightest pretext and made to stand up and salute every soldier or police official who passed through the streets and the lanes of the town...... When four soldiers came to arrest a Mohammedan, he jumped from the window. The soldiers questioned his wife. She became dumbfounded and her nerves broke down. After the departure of the soldiers, her husband found her lying dead. Such is the horrifying tale of the Ordinance Raj at Shopian."[1]

Maulvi Mohammad Abdullah, Advocate, was then approached by Brigadier Sutherland and sent to Shopian as an official under Notification No. 19-L to help in restoring normal life in the town. It is probable that the Brigadier may not have been acting on his own and may have been asked by the Prime Minister to do so in order to discredit him. He undertook the responsibility but only a few days after reaching Shopian, was arrested by the army authorities, summarily tried and sentenced to six months imprisonment on the charge of having urged the Hindus not to give evidence against Muslims who were being tried by Summary Courts. Mr. Middleton could not help observing in his report that in his opinion "the Munsif made ill-advised use of his summary powers in this instance".

But what was the effect of this unending stream of torture and vandalism in the name of law? This is what Mr. Bazaz has to say:—

"As I write these lines, admiration rushes forth from the bottom of my heart, and my head bows in reverence to the unbounded spirit of sacrifice which a large number of men and women, illiterate, unsophisticated and defenceless, manifested humbly, patiently and meekly, by undergoing the brutal torture which was inflicted upon them.

1 Inside Kashmir, p. 154-55.

The present structure of the national movement truly rests on the solid and secure foundation of those sacrifices. These atrocities, though extreme in their severity, did not produce the desired effect."[1]

Those killed in the firing at Shopian are :—

1. Abdul Qudus Tak, aged 50 years;
2. Aziz Shah, aged 50 years;
3. Mohammad Dar, aged 40 years;
4. Khizar Butt, aged 50 years;
5. Sajida Bano, aged 25 years.

With his pride humbled and self-confidence shattered, Hari Kishan Kaul now again tried to come to terms with Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah. He sent Thakar Kartar Singh and Pandit Jivan Lal Matto who tried partly to frighten him of serious consequences for his person and partly to win him over. Having failed to make any head-way, next time Pandit Jiwan Lal visited him alone but again he had to return disappointed. Meanwhile the Government was also working for the disruption of Muslim unity and seems to have partially influenced the thinking of Mir Waiz Yusuf Shah. Pandit Jiwan Lal again visited the jail and took Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah in a closed car to his own house where Mir Waiz Yusuf Shah, Maulvi Mohammad Yahya and Ghulam Mohammad Pandit were already waiting for him. Mir Waiz told him that he had already promised to the Government that he (Sheikh Abdullah) would forthwith stop making any speeches until the presentation of the memorandum to the Maharaja. Sheikh Abdullah was naturally surprised and told him that he should not have made such a commitment without his prior approval. However, in keeping with his respect for Mir Waiz, he offered to abide by any decision that the Muslim representatives, sitting as a Committee, may take in the matter. After the meeting, he was again removed to the Badami Bagh cantonment.

On the occasion of his 36th birthday on 3rd October, in a Durbar held in Srinagar, Hari Singh gave a sealed envelope to the Prime Minister who read it to the audience. It was a proclamation, announcing the release of all political prisoners, the withdrawal of Notification No. 19-L as well as all emergency laws, and the withdrawal of the army to its peace time positions. Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah and other political prisoners were therefore forthwith released.

In Jammu, Mr. A. R. Saghar and Sheikh Ghulam Qadir were arrested on 18th August. Next day Chaudhri Nawab Khan, father of Chaudhri Ghulam

1 Inside Kashmir, p. 156.

Abbas Khan, and Chaudhri Hukam Din, father of Mr. Saghar were also taken into custody. Born on 5.3.1910 in Jammu city, Mr. Allah Rakha Saghar came under the influence of the political movement that was raging in north India while still in his teens. Instead of continuing his studies, he jumped into the political arena and soon gained considerable prominence. A highly intelligent man and one of the few political workers in the State who can both speak and write with equal fluency and ease, Mr. Saghar soon became one of the top leaders of the freedom Movement. In the politics of Jammu province upto 1939 and in the politics of the Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference after its revival in 1942, Mr. A. R. Saghar has doubtlessly played the role of the party manipulator without which the role of Chaudhri Ghulam Abbas Khan, as the party light, would remain incomplete and inconclusive. Perhaps it is this unpleasant role that has largely blurred his public image in certain sections.

On 18th August, a Muslim woman carrying vegetables for sale was way-laid by Pandit boys near Khanqah-i-Sokhtah, adjacent to the house of Pandit Shyam Lal. Her clothes were torn and she was left almost naked. On 11th August, a child aged two to three years, was beaten and wounded by Hindu hooligans. The dead body of a Muslim woman was recovered from the river; she was allegedly drowned by soldiers, presumably after rape. On 24th September, 1931, a public meeting was held in Jammu under the auspices of the Children's Association which was addressed by student leaders Ghazi Ismail, Abdul Hamid and Inayatullah, condemning the arrest of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah. In the evening, another public meeting was held in condemnation of the firing at Srinagar. It was addressed by Chaudhri Ghulam Abbas, A. R. Saghar and Sheikh Ghulam Qadir. On 25th September, Muslim children took out a procession and on the 28th, a procession was taken out by small girls. Towards the end of September, the services of Malika Pukhraj, the Court dancer, were terminated and she was replaced by Hiran, a Hindu courtesan from Cawnpore. There seems no truth whatsoever in the stories in circulation since 1931 about the involvement of Malika Pukhraj in the freedom struggle. Qazi Mohammad Ahsan, Maulvi Mohammad Yasin, Mohammad Abdullah and Jalal-ud-Din were arrested in Sopore towards the end of September. A hartal was observed for four days. In Shopian, Habibullah Tak, a political worker, suffered a leg-fracture at the hands of the army.

In Jammu, a procession taken out by children on 3rd August, protesting against the killings in Kashmir valley, was lathi charged by the police as a result of which several children including Abdul Qayyum,

Ghulam Hussain, Khurshid Ahmed, Inayatullah, Mohammad Hussain, Mohammad Ismail and Ghazi Ismail Shaheed, all under 10 to 12 years, were injured. In consequence of a lightening strike, the Government was compelled to call off a military parade scheduled for 1st August in Srinagar to overawe Muslims.[1]

In Muzaffarabad, though the Muslims were agitated about happenings in other parts of the State, no political activity was visible for a long time. The lull was broken by Hindu students of the local High School who took out a procession raising anti-Muslim and pro-Maharaja slogans. This was resented to by the Muslim students, resulting in a mutual clash. The provocation was condemned in subsequent meetings held in several mosques. The Government sent Mr. Salam Shah from Srinagar who ordered the arrest of about two dozen Muslims including Master Abdul Aziz, his brother Khawaja Fateh Joo, Pir Hisam-ud-Din Gilani, later M.L.A., Khawaja Abdul Qadir, Chaudhry Wali Joo, Faqir Joo Kada and Pir Qalandar Shah. They were removed to Srinagar, summarily tried and sentenced to various terms of imprisonment. A contingent of the Dogra army remained stationed here for sometime.

1 Inquilab 6th August 1931.

Ghulam Hussain, Khurshid Ahmad, Inayatullah, Mohammad Hussain, Mohammad Ismail and Ghulam Rasul Shaheed, all of 10 to 12 years, were injured. In consequence of a lightening strike, the Government was compelled to call off a military parade scheduled for 1st August in Srinagar to overawe Muslims.[1]

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1. [illegible] August 1931.

CHAPTER INDEX

CHAPTER X

The Muslim Demands

The Muslims were now called upon to present a memorandum of their grievances on 16th October. To minimize its importance and arm itself with an excuse for postponing its consideration, the Government also invited other communities to present their grievances. No such demand had been voiced by them because Pandits, Mahajans, Dogras and Sikhs had in fact no grievances. They were like the privileged ruling communities of the medieval ages. The memorandum that Maulvi Abdur Rahim had taken to Lahore, had since been received, after being revised and redrafted by the All India Kashmir Committee which sent Maulana Yaqub Khan, later Editor of the Civil & Military Gazette, Maulana Mohammad Ismail Ghaznavi and Maulana Abdur Rahim Dard to Srinagar to assist Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah and his colleagues in bringing about any changes that may be deemed necessary. It took them several days to revise the draft. Mr. Zahur Ahmed claims to have typed the final script.[1] An advance copy was sent to the palace on 18th October. On 19th October, the aforementioned representatives had a meeting with the Maharaja in Taleh Manzil, Srinagar. The memorandum which was read by Khawaja Saad-ud-Din Shawl in his capacity as Chairman of the Committee, is reproduced below:—

1 Kashmir Ki Kahani, p. 102

"IN THE NAME OF GOD, THE MOST MERCIFUL AND BENEFICENT.

To,

His Highness,
The Maharaja Bahadur of Jammu and Kashmir State,
Srinagar.

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR HIGHNESS,

While presenting this Memorial to Your Highness for your kind consideration, we, the representatives of Jammu and Kashmir Muslims, beg respectively to offer our sincere thanks to Your Highness for your very graciously granting us an opportunity of laying our grievances and needs before you, and for granting amnesty to most of the political prisoners and under-trial persons on the auspicious occasion of Your Highness' birthday.

We assure Your Highness that the reforms and improvements which we are going to suggest do not owe their origin to any artificial agitation. In fact a long series of unbearable hardships and disabilities under which we have been labouring have forced us to the conclusion that without the reforms and improvements, contained in this humble Memorial, the lives of the Muslim subjects of Your Highness will continue to be extremely miserable.

We acknowledge with gratitude that Your Highness and Your Highness' ancestors have enacted some good laws for the State and have effected certain praise-worthy improvements, and we are convinced that Your Highness and Your Highness' ancestors have been inspired by sincere love and solicitude for the State subjects, but, as Your Highness would concede, no single individual can, without the help and co-operation of others, look after the welfare of a vast territory like Jammu and Kashmir. Neither can good laws alone, without the help of sympathetic officials, bring about any good results. We, therefore, beg respectfully to state that inspite of certain good laws, Your Highness' subjects cannot enjoy peace and prosperity unless they are afforded suitable opportunities to influence and criticise the work of the Executive responsible for the observance of the said laws. The truth rather is that even for the enactment of good laws the help and cooperation of the peole are essential, for, without knowing from the people their real needs and requirements, no truiy good laws can be made.

After these introductory remarks we beg to submit that, excepting the Royal person of Your Highness, the Muslim subjects of the State

have lost all confidence in the officials of the State to the extent that they cannot even wait till such time as may be required for the framing of reformed constitution and its subsequent introduction. The delay involved would, we are afraid, be looked upon not as something essential but as a ruse for putting off the needs of Your Highness' Muslim subjects.

Your Highness' Muslim subjects, therefore, humbly pray that in order to allay the aforesaid misgivings and to convince them that the State Executive is really prepared to help in the fulfilment of the good intentions of Your Highness, a declaration of policy indicating a change of heart and covering the following points may kindly be immediately made. This declaration should be to the effect that:—

1. All those officials of the State, who have immediately before or during the disturbances, offended the religious feelings of the Muslims or in any way interfered with their religious practice, be properly punished after due enquiry.

2. All Mosques, grave-yards and other sacred places, together with their original attached property in the possession of the State or transferred by the State to a third party, be restored to the Muslims.

3. All those persons, who have been dismissed, suspended, degraded or otherwise punished in any respect in connection with the present political movement, be reinstated or restored to their posts, position or grade, as the case may be; similarly their relatives should not be made to suffer in any way on their account.

4. Suitable compensation be granted to the relatives of those who were killed during the disturbances and also to those who were disabled therein.

5. The cases of such political offenders, as have been convicted for some alleged acts of violence or abetment, and have failed to appeal, be gone into by Your Highness in order to find out whether in the present time of political advancement, their offences really amount to violence. If Your Highness does not find them guilty of violence, they should be released. It is further prayed that in considering all such cases, Your Highness may also be graciously pleased to exercise Your Royal prerogative of mercy.

6. An independent Commission should be appointed to inquire into the conduct of the State officials, the Police and the Military, towards

the people during the days of the political disturbances with a view to finding out whether their behaviour was in conformity with the law as popularly understood. If any of the officials is found guilty in this respect, he should be properly dealt with, irrespective of his position or rank.

7. Your Highness' subjects most respectfully submit that no permanent peace is possible unless the same law be enforced in the State for freedom of press, freedom of speech, and for the establishment of Anjumans and Associations as obtains in British India. As matters stand, we are deprived of all the ways and means of intellectual and economic progress. Our wise men are unable to benefit the people by their wisdom, and our masses cannot improve their condition without organisation.

8. As a proof of the fact that the Muslim subjects of Your Highness will in future be treated fairly, a declaration may kindly be made immediately to the effect that there would be perfect religious freedom in the State and that conversion would entail no confiscation of property in favour of relatives as is the practice at present. Your Highness, who, we believe, fully recognises the value of religious liberty and tolerance, will agree that there is no justification for a person to be deprived of his property on his conversion to another religion; for, it amounts to religious interference, and in the presence of such practice, Your Highness' Muslim subjects cannot have any sense of security in the matter of their being treated fairly.

9. Lastly, we beg leave to state that Your Highness' subjects can enjoy real peace only when they have been conceded their right to an effective share in the legislation of the State and of criticising the administration. Any legislation to secure this end would, however, require time. Therefore Your Highness' Muslim subjects, and as far as we know, a section of Your Highness' Hindu and Sikh subjects as well, think it necessary that at least an immediate assurance may be given to them to the effect that in future they would be treated in accordance with some definite constitution, and a declaration may be immediately made that Your Highness' Government will be based on constitutional principles.

CONSTITUTION

I. Fundamental Rights

Your Highness, after referring to the points which need immediate attention, and starting with the presumption that Your Highness will be pleased to concede them, we beg leave to present an outline

of the constitution which will, in our opinion, satisfy the people and serve as a basis for future development.

In our opinion it is vitally essential that the eternal and unchanging elementary rights of humanity, of which Your Highness' subjects are almost deprived in all contrast to the outside world, should be fully and properly secured for them. These rights are the following:—

1. Perfect religious freedom in respect of religious observance, practice, preaching, conversion and the rights connected therewith as obtains in British India.

2. Perfect freedom of assemblage and of setting up Anjumans as obtains in British India.

3. Perfect freedom of speech as obtains in British India.

4. Freedom of the press with only such necessary restrictions as obtain in British India. In this connection we may add that as there exists no press in the State at the present time, and we cannot at once avail ourselves of the freedom asked for, the State authorities should have no objection to the circulation of Muslim papers from outside within the State. We see no reason why against all usage of civilised countries, the State should object to and stop the circulation of such papers as criticise, in public interest and with due deference to the person of Your Highness, the attitude and behaviour of some of its officials, or point out defects in the existing laws and regulations of the State.

5. There should be perfect equality of rights and equality of treatment for all State subjects in all respects.

2. Constitution of the Executive and the Legislature

(*a*) *The Executive:*

It should be laid down that:—

1. The policy of the State shall, henceforth, be the increasing association of the State subjects in the administration of the State on the lines of a progressive Representative form of Government.

2. The Ministers shall, of course, be appointed by the Ruling Chief but Muslims should be represented on the Ministry in proportion to

their numerical strength. If capable Muslims from among the Muslim subjects of the State are not available to fill the posts, recruitment should be made from the Muslims outside the State until the time when the Muslims of Kashmir become sufficiently advanced to be appointed as Ministers, as is the practice for the importation of non-Muslims at present.

3. No Minister shall in future remain in office for more than five years.

4. If 70 percent of the members of the Legislature (about which recommendations follow), pass a resolution to the effect that they have no confidence in a certain Minister, that Minister shall forthwith be relieved of his duties.

5. The Ministers shall be responsible to the Ruler, but if the representatives of the country should demand from them any information concerning their respective departments, they shall be bound to furnish the required information to the Legislature except with regard to matters connected with the person of the Ruler, his heir-apparent, or such foreign affairs as the Ruler may think wise not to disclose.

6. Though the Ministers would not be resopnsible to the Legislature, yet they should be instructed by the Maharaja Bahadur in the letter of appointment to respect the opinion of the majority and to act in conformity with it, so far as possible.

(*b*) *The Legislature:*

It should be laid down that:—

1. There shall be a Legislative Assembly of Jammu and Kashmir to keep His Highness the Maharaja Bahadur and his Executive informed of public opinion and to frame the necessary laws.

2. After such an assembly has been constituted, no new law which has not been passed by the said Assembly, and no old law which has been abrogated by it, should be enforced in the country excepting such temporary ordinances as the Maharaja Bahadur may enforce on occasions of violent disturbances or grave emergencies; but such ordinances shall not remain in force for more than six months.

3. At least seventy per cent of the members of the Assembly shall be elected and thirty percent may be nominated by His Highness, the

Maharaja Bahadur. Of the 30 nominated members, 10 should be Rajputs, being an important minority and representing the ruling dynasty; the rest of the nominated members should be according to the population proportion of the various communities with the proviso that of the total 30 nominated members, one half should be non-officials.

4. Rules shall be framed in a way that the elected representatives of different religions are returned in proportion to the number of their respective adherents.

5. As regards franchise, it should be on as wide a basis as practicable, and the method of election to the Assembly should be based on the direct system.

6. The Assembly shall be the sole authority for legislation. It shall also have the power to criticise the work of the various departments, to pass a vote of confidence or non-confidence in the Ministers, to demand from them such information as may be necessary for a thorough knowledge of the working of their departments, and to discuss the annual budget. No new tax shall be imposed, nor any of the old taxes enhanced without first obtaining the sanction of the Assembly. In special circumstances, however, the Maharaja Bahadur shall have the power of veto in legislation.

7. No legal action shall lie against a member of the Assembly for expressing any opinion whatever on the floor of the House, except with regard to the person of the Ruler or his heir-apparent.

8. The President of the Assembly shall be nominated by the Maharaja Bahadur for the first term. Afterwards the Legislature shall have the power to elect its own President.

9. A fixed percentage of the total income of the State should be set apart as Privy purse for the Maharaja Bahadur and his family, and excepting this sum, all items of the State budget should be open to criticism in the Assembly.

LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT

Municipalities as constituted at present are no good, and are rather responsible for making this useful institution unpopular with the people. We, therefore, request that Municipal Committees be established in all the towns of the State on the following lines:

All municipal work should be entrusted to the town committees in which elected members should form the majority. The President also should be from amongst the non-official elected members. The Wazir Wazarat may be empowered to nominate upto 10 percent of the members, and where the total number is less than 10, there should be one nominated member provided the elected majority is not thereby affected.

Similarly in all districts, District Boards should be constituted, the members of which should be elected except 10 percent who may be nominated by the Wazir Wazarat. For the first five years, the Wazir Wazarat may preside over the District Boards. Later on, however, the President should be elected from among the elected members by a majority of votes.

The Municipal Committees and the District Boards should have the same duties and powers as in the Punjab and should, like the Assembly, have communal representation.

We respectfully request your Highness to be pleased to immediately issue necessary instructions with regard to the establishment of Municipal Committees and District Boards on these lines.

JUDICIARY

Seventy percent of the High Court Judges should be Muslims.

REVENUE

Land Revenue should be assessed on the same lines as in the Punjab.

SERVICES

Communal proportion should be observed in all grades of services and the basis of recruitment should be the minimum qualification.

1. If the requisite number of Muslims of high education are not available, recruitment be made from less qualified Muslims in preference to better qualified non-Muslims. For instance, Matriculate Muslims should have preference over non-Muslim graduates excepting of course with regard to such departments in which high technical education may be essential. In this way Muslim representation in the services should be increased by at least 10 percent every year until they get their due share in the services.

2. There should be a Public Service Commission in the State and the different communities should be represented on it according to their numerical strength.

3. His Highness the Maharaja Bahadur should have the power to appoint 25 percent of the total number of higher grade posts directly with due regard to communal proportion.

4. Where necessary, age restriction should be relaxed to redress communal inequality.

CONCLUSION

Your Highness! these are our main suggestions with regard to the future constitution of the State and the fundamental rights of the State subjects. There are other suggestions as well, respecting some of the acute grievances of Your Highness' Muslim subjects, which, though requiring careful thought and consideration, are such as may be adopted in a much shorter time than the framing of a Constitution. Owing to their different nature we are submitting these grievances in the form of an Appendix to which, it is prayed, Your Highness may be pleased to give immediate attention.

We conclude this Memorial by again offering our sincere thanks to Your Highness, and hope that keeping in view the advancement of the times and the noble example already set by some of the Ruling Chiefs of the Indian States, particularly those of Cochin and Mysore, Your Highness will be most graciously pleased to give your very kind and sympathetic consideration to our humble Memorial, and will thus strengthen the bonds of love and affection by inspiring your Muslim subjects, who have ever been loyal to your Highness' family, with even stronger feelings of loyalty and devotion.

We beg to remain,
Your Highness' most loyal
and
devoted subjects.

1. Muhammad Yusuf (Mir Waiz).
2. Ahmedullah (Mir Waiz Hamdani)
3. Saad-ud-Din Shawl.
4. Syed Hussain Shah Jalali.
5. Ghulam Ahmed Ashai.
6. Yaqub Ali.

7. Shahab-ud-Din.
8. Abdul Hamid.
9. Ghulam Abbas.
10. Gauhar Rahman.
11. S. M. Abdullah.

Representatives of Jammu and Kashmir Muslims.

Srinagar Dated : 19 October, 1931.

APPENDIX

1. Zamindars

(*a*) Zamindars of Kashmir are deprived of proprietary rights over their lands whereas those of Jammu fully enjoy these rights. The people of Kashmir cannot sell or mortgage their lands of their own will. They cannot even cut the mulberry, the walnut and the chinar trees grown on their private lands or make use of them, nor can they remove the dead and fallen timber of such trees with the result that the Kashmir Zamindar is no better than a mere tenant. There is no reason to make a distinction between Kashmir and other parts of the State. The State cannot claim proprietary rights over Kashmir lands merely because Kashmir was purchased from the British. A transaction of this kind could only affect the rights of government but not the proprietary rights of the subjects on their lands. No government has the right to sell the proprietary rights of the lands belonging to the people. We therefore request Your Highness to be most graciously pleased to restore Your Highness' Zamindar subjects to their full proprietary rights. In this connection we may add that the view expressed in certain quarters that the present system is in the interest of zamindar himself, is incorrect. There can be no justification whatever in depriving a person of his lawful rights with the alleged object of protecting him against the danger of his land passing into the hands of moneylenders. In our opinion this danger can and should be effectively guarded against by the introduction of Land Alienation and Pre-emption Acts. Anyhow nothing should stand in the way of full proprietary rights being granted to the Kashmir Zamindars.

(*b*) The zamindars have acute grievances against the departments of Forests, Revenue, Police, Games Preservation and Mulberry-

culture. It is therefore requested that a Commission consisting of non-official elements be appointed to inquire into these grievances, and submit a report to Your Highness with a view to improving their condition.

(*c*) Bribery is common and chiefly affects the zamindars; effective steps should be taken to stop it.

(*d*) The way in which Nautor rights are granted to State servants and others is mostly objectionable. Nautor prepared by zamindars should on no account be given away as grants. Those already given should be cancelled.

(*e*) Coronation concessions granted to zamindars have been frittered away by wrong interpretations. Steps should be taken to rectify the mistakes.

(*f*) The grazing tax is too heavy; it should be as in the neighbouring British territory.

2. Bakarwals

(*a*) The tax on the Bakarwals is too heavy and is ruining them financially. The annual tax of two rupees, seven annas, per goat sometimes exceeds the price of the goat itself. The object underlying the tax is apparently to encourage sheep-breeding which is helpful in the woollen industry and the protection of forests. But these considerations do not justify the imposition of so heavy a tax which is ruinous for the great investment of the Bakarwals. The object in view may be secured by means of sheep-farming, State subsidy and by educating the Bakarwals. We, therefore, humbly pray that the tax on goats should be the same as that on sheep, or it may be slightly higher.

(*b*) The Muslim Bakarwals have been branded as a criminal tribe, while the Hindu tribes who follow a similar profession bear no such stigma. This invidious distinction is causing great heart-burning, and may kindly be immediately removed. If any Bakarwal is guilty of an offence, he should be dealt with under the ordinary law of the land.

3. Arms

The people of Kashmir are deprived of the right of possessing arms, whereas their fellow subjects of Jammu have no restrictions.

It is requested that this invidious distinction may kindly be removed. Similarly there should be no distinction between Jammu and Kashmir in respect of game laws for State subjects.

4. Military

There are no arrangements for the Military education of the Muslims, with the result that they are deprived of their due share in the high military posts. The existing Military College at Jammu, being a Hindu Wakf, benefits the Hindus only. It is necessary therefore that the State should establish a high class Military College of its own, and only those who undergo a course of training in this institution should be appointed to higher posts in the Army. The rights of Muslims and other communities should be duly safeguarded in this College in proportion to the strength of their population.

5. Customs

Certain custom duties levied at present are hampering the trade of the country. No duty should be levied on goods exported from the State. Nor should any import duty be imposed on medicines or on goods imported personally, or through mail for bonafide private use. No duty should be levied on genuine State-made goods on re-import whether shown to custom officers or not before export.

6. Labour

The condition of the labourers of Kashmir is pitiable. We request that a Commission be appointed to enquire into their condition, hours of labour, terms of contract with the employers, etc., and that after considering its report, a law should be framed which should secure to the labourers their legitimate rights. New means of employment should also be found out for the unemployed.

7. Education

The Muslims of Kashmir are deplorably backward in education. Unfortunately Mr. Sharp's report, which would have benefited them, was not acted upon. To improve the condition of the Muslims educationally, in addition to Mr. Sharp's recommendations, the following measures may kindly be adopted immediately:—

(a) The number of Middle and High schools should be increased, and each important centre of Muslim population should have adequate

arrangements for education. It is hoped, Your Highness will be pleased to issue immediate instructions for this purpose.

(b) Colleges for higher industrial education should be started, with one at Srinagar.

(c) In order to make up for the educational backwardness of Muslims, more special stipends should be reserved for and awarded to Muslim students. Promising Muslims should be sent out to British India and foreign countries for higher education.

(d) Adequate number of seats for Muslim students should be reserved in professional and technical institutions, and also in the science faculties of schools and colleges.

(e) Instruction is imparted in Hindi in certain Girls schools, which is proving a great obstacle in the way of Muslim girls. This obstacle should be removed. The medium of instruction for girls should be Urdu as it is for the boys."[1]

The Maharaja made a brief reply. The tone of his speech was conciliatory. He promised due consideration and at the same time informed them that he had decided to appoint a Commission to go into their grievances and that an announcement was to be made soon.

To demonstrate its sincerity, the Government announced the restoration of Pathar Masjid, Srinagar, though certain conditions were imposed, which were naturally not accepted by the Muslims. On 29th November, a big public meeting was held in the Mosque to celebrate its reopening for prayers. In recognition of the part played by him since 1924 in the agitation for its restoration, Khawaja Saad-ud-Din Shawl was invited to preside over the meeting which was addressed by Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, Maulvi Mohammad Abdullah, Syed Mirak Shah, Mian Ahmed Yar and Pir Hissam-ud-Din. The city was profusely illuminated. A massive structure, with a spacious compound, entirely built of chiselled stone, it was built by Empress Noor Jahan and is one of the most impressive Mughal monuments in the State. Its reopening for prayers, after nearly a hundred and thirteen years, being a historic occasion, was solemnised as a national festival. It has since been the venue of many an important political meetings.

THE KILLINGS CONTINUE

In the month of November, the Movement took a serious turn in Mirpur. Sardar Gauhar Rehman Khan, a member of the Young Mens'

1 Ahmedia Jamaat Library, Rabwah.

Muslim Association, who has been already noticed as a member of the Jammu delegation that was to wait upon the Maharaja, went to Mirpur to launch a no-tax campaign. A new Settlement had taken place in the district which had worked very harshly against the tillers of the land. The land revenue had been increased; Nautor outstandings had been inflated and the categorisation of land had been also done unjustly, resulting in arbitrary enhancement of land revenue. It was under these circumstances that a no-tax campaign was launched by Gauhar Rehman in consultation with and the approval of the local leadership, among whom was a fiery young man, Illahi Bakhsh, whose forefathers had migrated from Kashmir valley during the great famine. The Movement soon caught the imagination of the masses and in a matter of few days, realisation of taxes came to a stand-still. It also spread to the tehsil of Mendhar in Poonch Jagir and parts of Rajouri. On 5th Poh, 1988 (20th December, 1931), the Government promulgated Notification No. L-24 to provide enhanced punishment for the non-payment of Government dues. It made participants in the Movement and even those who could be suspected of any support, express or implied, liable to imprisonment extending up to six months or fine without any limitation or both. With the promulgation of the Notification, a stream of Muslims were sent to jail, summarily tried and sentenced. Among others, who were arrested and later became dedicated workers of the freedom Movement were Illahi Bakhsh, Mohammad Akbar Khan, Maulvi Mohammad Abdullah of Siakh and Haji Wahab Din in Mirpur tehsil, Raja Zaman Ali in Samahni, tehsil Bhimber and Sardar Fateh Mohammad of Kerala, Mendhar. The imprisonment of a large number of peasants for refusing to pay land revenue and in some cases, the sale by auction of their movables, heightened the agitation. The district had a sizable population of Hindu money-lenders who had been fleecing the peasants for well over a century. As could be expected, they identified themselves with the Government and at some places, like Mirpur and Kotli towns, organised small demonstrations expressing their support for its policies. It was naturally resented to by the Muslims and part of their anger therefore got diverted against them. Another reason was that the Hindu money-lenders, personified, on the spot, the hated Dogra rule with some of its most hateful aspects. The result was that at some places there were Hindu-Muslim clashes. For instance, at Alibeg, a small village in Mirpur tehsil, some houses and shops were set on fire, which unfortunately also engulfed a part of the adjacent gurdawara. Sukhchainpura and Dadyal also witnessed incidents of similar nature.

In Mirpur two peasants were shot dead by a Government supporter Chaudhri Fazal Ellahi who was arrested for fear of popular reaction but later released and the case against him withdrawn. When the area was

handed over to the army, they repeated the same excesses of which they had been guilty in the Valley but here, unlike Kashmir valley, sympathetic Muslim Punjab being just a few miles away, thousands crossed into Jhelum and Gujrat to seek refuge from persecution.

The Mahajans of Rajouri were notorious for their extremely dishonest dealings with the poor Muslim peasantry. In 1914, one Maulvi Abdur Rehman who criticised the money-lenders for their malpractices, and condemned the Government for protecting them, was arrested alongwith many others. Many a mosque were sealed and saying of prayers at the Eidgah was forbidden.

On 9th Magh, 1988 (21st January, 1932), thousands of Muslims collected at the Eidgah in Bharouta to say their Jumma prayers in defiance of the 18-year old prohibitory order. On the advice of Sardar Teerath Singh, the SDM, who frightened them to believe that the Muslims were about to loot them, the Hindus closed down their business. At the same time, the army and the police, assisted by bands of armed non-Muslims, surrounded the Eidgah. The S.D.M. then sent a deputation of pro-Government Muslims, comprising Mirza Habibullah, Munshi Feroz Din, Chaudhri Wazir Ali, Fateh Lone, Ghaffar Joo Zargar and Sheikh Fazal Alam (Police Head constable), to persuade them to leave the Eidgah without saying their Jumma prayers. The deputationists were assured that they had no intention to disturb peace and would return to their homes after saying their prayers. Simultaneously, a large procession of Muslims came from Darhal and joined the prayers. After prayers a public meeting was held to condemn the Government for Muslim killings in the Valley and to express their support for the popular demands. In the meanwhile, appeared a Dogra Risala alongwith Sardar Teerath Singh and Amar Nath, Munsif Reasi. Together with men from the infantry, who were already on duty, they fell upen the audience but without resorting to firing, pushed them towards Thakar Dawala which has a narrow foot-path for exit, sandwiched between a river on one side and a huge mountain on the other. Just when the great majority of the congregation, was negotiating the foot-path, the brave Dogra soldiers opened fire, killing 25 persons on the spot.

Nine persons were arrested. Later, when a summary inquiry into the incident was held by Sahibzada Mohammad Umar, Magistrate, at the persistent demand of Muslims, both the S.D.M. as well as the Munsif claimed that no firing order had been given by them. It was established in the inquiry that the army had fired seventy-two rounds. Among the dead, sixteen belonged to Drahl and nine to Bharouta.

The names of only ten are available from records and are given below:—

(1)	Shahab-ud-Din	Caste	Gujar	Kablu
(2)	Bahadur Ali	,,	Gujar	Bargoi
(3)	Chala	,,	not known	Laba
(4)	Hashmat	,,	Gujar	Pallandi
(5)	Faqir	,,	Gujar	Saj
(6)	Kala	,,	Jarral	Bara Khana
(7)	Shafu	,,	Jarral	Rajouri
(8)	Diwan Ali	,,	Mughal	Ghamir
(9)	Kala	,,	Thakur	Drahl
(10)	Bilo Malik	,,	Malik	Drahl.

In Kotli, on the night falling between the 6th and 7th of Magh, 1988 (18th and 19th January, 1932), the town was besieged by a large crowd of Muslims from the surrounding villages as reprisal for the forced evacuation of its Muslim inhabitants on account of ever-increasing hostility displayed by Dogra troops and its Hindu inhabitants. The attack failed because of their out-dated arms and the limited quantity of ammunition which got exhausted in a few hours; six Muslims lost their lives in the encounter. It was preceded by the burning down of houses belonging to Hindu money-lenders in villages Chaula, Panjeda, Kotli Solan, Seri and Khui-Ratta, causing considerable loss. Two Hindus lost their lives in the incidents. On 13th Magh (25th January, 1932), a second raid also failed for similar reasons but resulted in a greater tragedy because twenty-two Muslims, who had taken up positions in the house of one Gul Mohammad, to direct match-lock fire on a near-by army picket, were surrounded by Dogra troops after their ammunition exhausted and burnt alive in the same house. Next day their charred bodies were buried in a single grave on the out-skirts of Kotli. The grave is situated on the roadside in front of the air-field. It is a sad commentary on the Muslims of Kotli that not even a plaque exists to identify their resting place and enshrine their memory. After the failure of this effort, scores of Muslims were arrested and tried for murder and rioting; prominent among them were Karim Dad Khan alias Keema from Panjera, Hashim Khan alias Hasho, and Fazal Ellahi from Kotli proper.

In Mendhar, Sardar Fateh Mohammad Karelvi, who had earlier been a member of the State police force, led the agitation. Many a money-lenders'

property was destroyed and their account books burnt down. There was, however, no loss of human life. The commotion spread to the town of Poonch where the local Raja had to retire to his fort and remained cut off until army reinforcements arrived on the scene. In these parts also, scores of Muslims were put on trial. Most of the trials were held by Sardar Mohammad Ayub Khan, who later retired as a District and Sessions Judge in the post-freedom era.

By the time the no-tax campaign in the Mirpur district had assumed the shape of a gigantic popular movement, the Maharaja's administration had almost collapsed in various parts of the State and he was, therefore, compelled to seek the assistance of the British Government. British troops were moved from Jullundhur cantonment to Jammu and Mirpur alongwith some political officers. Mr. Jardine was put in charge of Mirpur district. Royal Air Force planes were also pressed into service for observation purposes in the district, because of the absence of adequate means of communication.

Mr. Salisbury of the Indian Civil Service was appointed Administrator of Jammu and Amar Singh of the Punjab Police as D.I.G. Mr. Lawther, a D.I.G. in the Frontier was appointed Inspector General of Police in place of Lt.-Col. Gandharb Singh who was retired in consequence of the enquiry into police firing outside the Central Jail, Srinagar. Mr. Salisbury tried to pacify agitated Muslim minds by immediately making some changes in the administration and promoted some Muslim Officers to responsible posts so that he could also have access to the Muslims through men whom they were prone to lend their ears. They ignored the official routine or the cumbersome bureaucratic procedures. Several times they wrote orders on cigarette packets and ensured their compliance. Several Hindu officers including Ch. Chalter Singh Charak, Governor Jammu, were relieved forthwith as they had proved unfit to handle the situation.

Despite elaborate measures on the routes of entry, the Army as well as the Police failed to stop the entry of the volunteers from Punjab because of the eagerly-extended help by Muslims inhabiting the border. A large number of Additional Police was recruited to cope with the situation but the influx was so regular and heavy that the authorities found themselves helpless. With the winter setting in, there was lack of space to keep them in custody and only barbed wire fencing was sometimes considered sufficient. The entire State being in a whirlpool of disturbances, the swift movement of the Army and the Police was almost impossible especially due to the lack of transport and the non-cooperation of Muslim masses who had, for a century, been used as

beasts of burden. From some villages in Jammu district where Muslims were in a majority, the Hindu population quietly slipped away to Jammu.

THE IMPERISHABLE BEGUM BOHRU

While matters stood thus in Jammu province, a worker of the Movement, Mufti Zia-ud-Din of Poonch, who was in Srinagar, was banished from the State. The banishment of a political worker at a time when Muslim grievances were being examined by the Glancy Commission, had an immediate public reaction because the Muslims interpreted it as proof of bad faith. The Notification No. 19-L which had assumed great notoriety was again enforced. In defiance of an order served upon him a few days earlier, prohibiting him from making any public speech, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah addressed a public meeting. The ban was obviously provocative and no political leader can but treat such an order with contempt and defiance. He was arrested on 23rd January from a house-boat and removed to Badamibagh cantonment. Tried summarily, he admitted the contents of his speech and was sentenced to six months imprisonment. Hartals and processions were as usual resorted to. In Srinagar there were many lathi charges in which scores of people received injuries. It was winter when Kangris (fire baskets) are in common use. The people freely resorted to their use as a weapon against the army and the police. Near the old bridge in Baramula town on the 28th January 1932, a clash took place with the army in which the latter resorted to firing. One man was killed on the spot and a few were injured among whom was this writer's cousin, Habibullah Saraf, who later succumbed to his injuries.

The names of the martyrs are given below:

1. Freechi, widow of Khawaja Razaq Bohru, aged 30 years.
2. Ghulam Rasool Nazir, aged 35 years.
3. Habibullah Saraf, aged 25 years.

Begum Bohru, better known as Mst. Freechi (فریزی), the rosy-cheeked, robustly built 30 year old widow of Khawaja Razaq Bohru, a specimen of the famed Kashmiri beauty, had been, like most of her town sisters, deeply disturbed by the continuing news of the innocent killings all over the Valley and played a prominent part in the processions taken out by women in the town. On the fateful day, a number of women took out a procession. They were mourning the martyrs and cursing the oppressors. When they reached near the right bank of Jhelum, in the midst of the town, the police blocked their passage and a Sub-Inspector used abusive language against political leaders. Freechi could bear it no

with the Maharaja on the next day. The deputation consisted of Mistri Yaqub Ali, Chaudhri Ghulam Abbas Khan, Syed Mohammad Amin Shah, and Sheikh Mohammad Amin. Mistri Yaqub Ali was spokesman of the deputation.[1] However, nothing came out of the meeting.

THE BRITISH INTERVENTION

With the publication outside the State of the news pertaining to the firing in Srinagar on the 13th of July, sprang up an organisation known as the All India Kashmir Committee. The Committee conducted a brilliant campaign in support of the Muslims of Kashmir. Another wing of Muslim public opinion in Punjab represented by the Ahrar did not subscribe to a constitutional agitation and believed that the best way of helping them was by sending volunteers to court arrest in support of their demands. Therefore, they launched their "Kashmir Chalo" Movement in September, 1931 when at least 2,500 volunteers entered the State and were taken into custody. The movement remained suspended till October because of the truce agreement between the Muslim representatives and the Government and in the hope that the memorial that was being presented to the Maharaja may bear fruit. But as Muslim demands were not readily accepted, the Ahrars felt that the Maharaja was just biding for time and had no intention to redress the grievances. So, on 29th October, they resumed their movement and in a few days, over two thousand Muslims were arrested on Suchetgarh border alone. This happened before 2nd November, 1931.

Realising that his resources were too inadequate to meet the worsening situation, the 'Prop of the British Government' and the 'Sipar-i-Saltanat-e-Englishia', therefore invoked the infamous Treaty of Amritsar and appealed to the Governor-General for help and protection. The latter was only too glad to render such assistance. Collapse of a hireling and that too in so strategic an area as Kashmir and more so, as the result of a popular revolt, was fraught with grave political consequences in the sub-continent itself. This was a situation with which the British Government could never be happy. So they immediately rushed to the aid of the Satarap and despatched, as first instalment, the Gora Rifle Brigade from Jullundhur cantonment. It was under these circumstances that the Maharaja announced the appointment of the Glancy Enquiry Commission on 12th November, 1931.

GLANCY COMMISSION

On 12th November, the Maharaja issued the promised proclamation appointing a Commission known to students of Kashmir history as the

1 Taseer, p. 190.

Glancy Commission. It was appointed to look into the grievances of various sections of the people, particularly those of the Muslims because it were they who had serious complaints against the Government. In the proclamation, the Maharaja also committed himself to the convening of a conference under the chairmanship of Mr. Glancy, after the Commission had completed its task, to consider constitutional reforms. The announcement was, therefore, very well received. On 13th November, at a largely-attended public meeting held in Srinagar, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah introduced a resolution welcoming its appointment and the commitment for introduction of constitutional reforms. Similar resolutions were passed in other places.

Mr. Glancy, who in later years, invited strong criticism by the Muslims of Punjab for his pro-Hindu leanings as Governor, had already served the State as Finance Member of the Cabinet and it was during this period that he had developed friendly relations with Hari Singh; it was natural that a close understanding should have developed between the two. When the Maharaja felt compelled to appoint an Inquiry Commission, partly because of his Government's failure to suppress the popular revolt inside the State and partly because of the highly effective agitation carried on in India generally and in Punjab in particular by Muslim organisations, in support of Kashmiri Muslims, he deliberately selected Glancy to chair it. No Hindu would have been acceptable to the Muslims; no Muslim could be trusted by him in the matter and as he had to appoint an Englishman to give the Commission a semblance of neutrality, he requested the Government of India to loan the services of Mr. Glancy. Four non-official members were nominated to assist him. Two representatives nominated in consultation with Muslim leaders were Khawaja Ghulam Ahmed Ashai from Kashmir valley and Chaudhri Ghulam Abbas from Jammu province. Pandit Prem Nath Bazaz, then a young graduate, who had already made an impact in Srinagar as a rising liberal leader, was to represent Hindus and particularly Pandits while Mr. Lok Nath Sharma from Jammu was to represent the Hindus of Jammu province.

The Commission began its work in Srinagar and then shifted to Jammu. Mr. Lok Nath Sharma withdrew from its deliberations in December because it rejected his demand for the exclusion from consideration of the question of Hindu converts right to ancestral property, which had been raised by Muslims. In vain were efforts made by Mr. Glancy and the Muslim representatives to persuade the Hindus to ask Mr. Sharma to return to the Commission or nominate someone else in his place. The report was presented to Mr. E.J.D. Colvin, who had in the meantime been appointed Prime Minister in

place of Hari Kishan Kaul on 22nd March, 1932. After detailing the Muslim grievances and quoting facts and figures officially placed before it, which have been already mentioned elsewhere in the book, the Commission made the following recommendations :

1. Muslim religious shrines, Khanqah Sokhta, Khanqah Bulbul Shah, Khanqah Dara Shikoh (Srinagar), Malshahi Bagh Mosque (Gandarbal), Khanqah Sufi Shah (Jammu city), Bahu Mosque (Bahu) and the Srinagar Eidgah be restored to Muslims.

2. Complete religious liberty should be enjoyed by every class and community.

3. Malikana to the State should be remitted. Proprietary rights in respect of all lands of which ownership is retained by the State (Kashmir Valley and Mirpur tehsil) should be granted to the occupancy tenants.

4. A special Inspector for Mohammaden education should be appointed. Recommendations of Mr. Sharp should be implemented and number of Muslim teachers should be increased.

5. All communities should receive a fair share in Government appointments. All vacancies should be properly advertised. In the case of local appointments, inhabitants of the district concerned should be appointed.

   The Commission also laid down the minimum qualifications for appointment to various branches of administration.

6. The grazing tax should be suspended in certain specified areas while in other places it should be ensured that it is not pressed too heavily.

7. Nautor areas (revenue outstandings on account of land newly brought under cultivation) in Mirpur tehsil should be written off.

8. The rights of agriculturists should not be impaired by privileges conferred on other classes.

9. All unauthorised exactions should be stopped. There should be decentralisation of power so that Ministers and Heads of Departments can function properly.

10. Payment according to proper rates should be made in connection with whatever labour is requisitioned for State purposes.

11. Villagers should receive full benefit of forest concessions especially in regard to fuel and timber for buildings.

12. Industrial development should receive urgent attention of the Government.

The Commission also recommended the abolition of marriage-tax, reduction in meatless days and a host of other measures relating to improvements in various departments.

The non-official members could not agree on certain points and, therefore, three notes of dissent formed part of the report. The first note was jointly attached by Chaudhri Ghulam Abbas Khan and Khawaja Ghulam Ahmed Ashai, demanding:

1. Abolition of disabilities imposed on converts to Islam from Hinduism. Mr. Glancy had not been able to agree to the Muslim point of view and had in his report just confused the issue.

2. Restrictions on the licensing of arms in Kashmir valley and Frontier districts should be removed.

3. The Rajput Training School, Jammu, should either be abolished or its admission thrown open to all sections of the population.

Pandit Prem Nath Bazaz also appended a note of dissent. It should be said to his lasting credit that his conduct was extremely honourable. There is no doubt that no other Pandit leader could have supported the just demands of Muslims because it correspondingly meant a diminution in the sphere of influence of his community. There is no doubt that the recommendations of the Commission would not have been what they were but for his courage and liberal mindedness. For his contribution, he holds a permanent place of honour in the hearts of Muslims who had, on many an occasion in later years, the opportunity of repaying, in some small measure, the debt of gratitude that we owe him. In his dissenting note, Mr. Bazaz recommended that the Srinagar Eidgah which was being made over to Muslims, should continue to remain available to all the communities as pasture and recreation ground, as in the past.

Chaudhri Ghulam Abbas also appended a separate note on certain issues, the most important among them being the grant of proprietary rights and assessment of land revenue. Chaudhri Sahib told this writer, while we were together in Montgomery jail, that a note had originally been written by Babu Mohammad Abdullah, the father

of Mr. Qudratullah Shahab, who was, at one time, incharge of a Sub-Division. Mr. Glancy considered the note too strongly-worded and failing to persuade Chaudhri Sahib to withdraw it, offered to draft a note on his behalf. Next morning, Mr. Glancy's note was approved by Chaudhri Sahib and the same was appended to the report. It recommended:

1. Muslim representation in services should be brought to their population ratio within ten years. In order to accelerate the process of achieving this target, Hindu employees who were already fifty years old or had put in twenty five years service, should be retired and the vacancies filled in by Muslims.

2. Departmental promotions should not exceed one-third.

3. Recruitment to the cavalry should be thrown open to Muslims and in all new Regiments, Muslims should get at least one-half.

4. A Public Service Commission should be appointed and recruitment should be made through it.

5. Malikana dues should be remitted and proprietary rights granted to all tenants.

6. While in the Punjab, land revenue was assessed on the basis of one-sixth of produce, here in Jammu it was one-fourth; it should be brought at par with the Punjab.

PANDITS' ROTI AGITATION

Kashmiri Pandits were unhappy with the recommendations; so were Muslims because the Commission had not accepted many of their important demands, such as representation in the Services in accordance with their ratio in the population; grant of licences for keeping arms in Kashmir valley and Frontier districts, throwing open of the State Army to Muslims of Kashmir valley, the repeal of laws preventing conversion of Hindus to Islam which had actually brought to a stand-still the spread of Islam both in the Valley as well as in the Frontier districts where, but for these discriminatory laws, the Hindu or Buddhist population would by then have been further reduced. Arthur Neve has conceded that but for the establishment of Dogra rule, Islam would have by now spread to other parts of Ladakh. The Muslims, however, welcomed the recommendations as a first step towards

achieving further gains and, therefore, did not come out in the streets but not so the Kashmiri Pandits.

The Pandits presented their demands and so-called grievances in a 141-page document. It was claimed that the Khanqah-e-Mualla was originally a Kali Mandir and that it should be made over to them. As these grievances were in fact imaginary and had been put forth merely to counter Muslim demands and cover their preponderance in the administration, they could cut no ice with a fact finding commission like the one headed by Glancy. They next tried to force Pandit Prem Nath Bazaz to follow in the foot-steps of Lok Nath Sharma and tender his resignation. It is possible that some higher ups were in the back ground and the intention was to damage the representative character of the Commission. Pandit Bazaz was bold and imaginative enough not to fall a prey to this conspiracy and showed great courage and strength of character by actively continuing his participation in its deliberations. This enraged the Pandits who indulged in cheap abuses against him and made his continued residence in the house of his forefathers impossible. In order to save himself and his family from violence and disgrace, Bazaz abandoned his home and shifted to a Muslim locality and took up residence in the house of one Mohammad Sultan from where he later started his weekly newspaper "The Vitasta". The breach and estrangement thus generated between him and his community continued ever after.

The recommendations of the Commission shocked the Pandit community in particular because it had not only factually proved their highly undue representation in Services but had also recommended measures, such as the laying down of the least qualifications for recruitment to many sectors of employment. Instead of recognising the merit of the recommendations and considering themselves still a specially privileged community because the Commission had not really done full justice to Muslim demands, they started a bitter and venomous campaign against Muslims. Public and private meetings at Shittal Nath Mandir became frequent. Finally they decided to launch a movement known as the 'Roti' Agitation. It was also decided to mobilize college and school children. They used to hold meetings in Hindu localities where some students would raise a cry: "Bhaaiyo, re bhaaiyo" and the crowd would respond with the slogan "Kaiyun bhai". Someone would then enquire "Kiya chahtey ho" and then, all of them would thrice raise the cry of "roti, roti, roti". The Pandit boys, in groups of twenty, would visit Government offices and snatch away the writing-holders from clerks who were mostly Pandits. This continued for about ten days but the Government took absolutely no notice. Then, those who were

in the back ground, introduced violence. One day a procession of students started from Shittal Nath and raising anti-Maharaja slogans went to Chankral Mohallah where shop-keepers were compelled to close down their shops. The duty Magistrate intervened and arrested a few students. Pandit Jia Lal Killam lodged a complaint with the Maharaja which was ignored. On the other hand, the I.G.P., who was an Englishman, ordered the flogging of the agitators and put Pandit Bishamber Nath A.S.P. incharge of the Flogging Centre. A few Pandit students actually suffered the sentence but then the movement fizzled out too quickly. Pandit Jia Lal Killam and Kayshap Bandhu were sentenced to six months imprisonment each.

During the agitation, Kashmiri Pandits voiced the following demands :

1. Free land grants for cultivation;
2. Special scholarships for industrial and technical education; and
3. Cash grants to start factories and similar other works.

Pandit Ragho Nath Veshnavi, Advocate, who was then a student of third year and spent a month in jail alongwith seventeen other students, later stated publicly, that he was distressed to learn that the agitation was a farce and had been started by Jia Lal Killam, Kayshap Bandhu and other Pandit leaders as a counter against Muslim demands.

Calm prevailed for a few months after the publication of the Glancy Report. Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah spent a part of his time in undertaking a strenuous tour of the Valley. Everywhere he was hailed as a Saviour. His popularity was now at its zenith. Part of his time he spent outside the State where he had gone to meet leaders of the All India Kashmir Committee, the Ahrars and Editors of the Muslim press in Lahore to thank them for their help and invaluable support.

On his return to Srinagar, it was decided to float a political organisation embracing Muslims of the entire State to provide them with a political platform. While preparations for the conference were afoot, disturbances broke out again. A cleanliness week was being observed in the city in connection with the Maharaja's birthday observed on 3rd October. The Government had a few days earlier released the list of the recipients of 'Karan Singh Scholarships' and because of the Muslim agitation, for the first time, Kashmiri Pandits did not receive the lion's share to which they had been accustomed to. So they decided to boycott the celebrations. On 22nd September, a procession was parading

the city. At Habakadal, some Hindu on-lookers brought down a photograph of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah from a ceremonial arch. To register their protest, the Muslims immediately closed their shops and came out in the streets. The celebrations had to be cancelled. Hartal remained in force for about a week. The house of Pandit Jia Lal Killam, who had made a highly provocative speech to a Hindu crowd at Shittal Nath a day earlier, was attacked. He and his family had to be evacuated under military protection. One hundred and fortyfive persons, 82 Hindus and 62 Muslims, were injured in the riots. A Kashmiri Pandit and a Muslim woman were killed. When news of the clashes spread in the country-side, clashes took place there also, particularly in Islamabad where a few Hindus were injured and some shops looted. At this stage Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah convened a meeting of all sections at Gol Bagh and succeeded in bringing back peace to the city. Pandit Jia Lal Klliam came there at the head of a Hindu procession, after Muslims had already assembled. He expressed regrets on behalf of Hindus and tendered an unqualified apology. Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah succeeded in persuading Muslims to forget the incident.

the city. At Habakadal, some Hindu on-lookers brought down a photograph of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah from a ceremonial arch. To register their protest, the Muslims immediately closed their shops and came out in the streets. The celebrations had to be cancelled. Hartal remained in force for about a week. The house of Pandit Jia Lal Kilam, who had made a highly provocative speech to a Hindu crowd at Shital Nath a day earlier, was attacked. He and his family had to be evacuated under military protection. One hundred and forty-five persons, 12 Hindus and 62 Muslims, were injured in the riots. A Kashmiri Pandit and a Muslim woman were killed. When news of the clashes spread in the country-side, clashes took place there also, particularly in Islamabad where a few Hindus were injured and some shops looted. At this stage Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah convened a meeting of all sections at Gol Bagh and succeeded in bringing back peace to the city. Pandit Jia Lal Kilam came there at the head of a Hindu procession, after Muslims had already assembled. He expressed regrets on behalf of Hindus and tendered an unqualified apology. Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah succeeded in persuading Muslims to forget the incident.

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CHAPTER XI

Muslim India Rallies to Support

THE ALL INDIA MUSLIM KASHMIRI CONFERENCE

It has already come on record that about a lakh of Muslims migrated from the State on account of the Sikh-Dogra oppression resulting in widespread famines and economic strangulation. Most of them settled in Punjab. In a few generations, they became a highly educated and economically prosperous community in the free atmosphere prevailing in British India. It was only natural that they should not have forgotten the land of their origin and maintained a sentimental attachment towards it. This was not unusual and may be traced even in such highly advanced countries like the United States whose Presidents, Kennedy Nixon and Carter, visited their towns of origin in Ireland after assuming the reins of office.

In 1896, sprang up an association named Anjuman-i-Kashmiri Mussalmanan-i-Lahore. Its first meeting, held in February, was also attended by Sheikh Mohammad Iqbal, who became famous later as Allama Sir Mohammad Iqbal. He read the following poem:—

هزار شکر کہ اک انجمن ہوئی قائم
یقین ہے راہ پہ آئے گا طالع واژوں
مثال شانہ اگر میری سو زبانیں ہوں
نہ طے ہو زلف رہ شکر ایزد بے چوں
خدا نے ہوش دیا متفق ہوئے سارے
سمجھ گئے ہیں تیری چال گنبد گردوں

چراغ عقل کو روشن کیا ہے ظلمت میں
ہمارے ہاتھ میں آ جائیگا در مکنوں
بڑھے یہ بزم ترقی کی دوڑ میں یا رب
کبھی نہ ہو قدم تیز آشنائے سکوں
جو تیری قوم کا دشمن ہو اس زمانہ میں
اسے بھی باندھ لے اقبال صورت مضموں

Before 1909, when Iqbal was its Secretary, the Association had widened its sphere of activities. It was, therefore, renamed Anjuman-i-Kashmiri Mussalmanan-i-Punjab. As it had, by 1920, established organisational contact with Kashmiri Muslims living outside Punjab, its name was changed to that of All India Muslim Kashmiri Conference. Some members of the Association also started publication of newspapers solely devoted to the cause of the uplift of Muslims in the State. Sheikh Jan Mohammad Ganai who owned a book shop, started publication of a weekly newspaper from Lahore named "Kashmir Gazette". Before 1909, Munshi Mohammad Din Fauq started publication of another weekly named "Kashmiri Magazine". In 1926, another weekly named "Kashmiri" started publication from Lahore. Hundreds of copies were sold in the State, particularly in the Valley. They contained articles and poems calling upon Muslims to educate their children, bring about social reforms and change their fatalistic outlook about things around them. They also carried on a mild agitation against the Kashmir Government for the discriminatory policy it was deliberately pursuing to deprive Muslims of their rights in services, enlistment in the army and advancement in the educational field. The campaign helped in creating a strong public opinion both inside as well as outside the State which the Dogra Government could not ignore for a long time. It also set up a publicity cell known as the "Kashmir Publicity Board" which published pamphlets about the inequalities and discrimination suffered by Kashmiri Muslims under the Dogra rule.

In 1909, the annual session of the All India Mohammadan Educational Conference was held in Amritsar. Allama Iqbal read the address of welcome on behalf of the Reception Committee and Nawab Salimullah Khan, the Nawab of Dacca, himself a Kashmiri, presided. The Conference was attended by many other leading Kashmiris from Punjab. The All India Muslim Kashmiri Conference also held its annual session in Amritsar at the same time. It was also presided over by Sir Salimullah. Among the resolutions adopted were those demanding the admission of Kashmiris to the army and for treating them as an agricultural tribe in the Punjab. Addressing the meeting, Nawab Salimullah Khan said:—

"پوشیدہ نیست کہ اسلاف ما بہ غرض سیر و سیاحت و ترقی تجارت و حصول روزگار راہ غربت گرفتند و از خطہ جنت نظیر انفراق نمودہ دریں ملک ہندوستان بہ مقامات مختلفہ اقامت درزیدند و در صورت اجنبی زندگانی مے گذرند ہنگامیکہ آفتاب مغربیہ بہ ہندوستان طلوع نمود و اقوام مختلفہ دیار از علوم مغربیہ بہرہ اندوز گشتند ، درآں زماں بزرگاں خطہ با وجود مشکلات مہاجرین دریں راہ قدم بہ نہادند و افتاں و خیزاں خویشتن را بجائے رسانند کہ امروز بہ اعتبار علوم و فنون و حصول مراتب و وجاحت دنیویہ و ادائے فرائض دینیہ و بہ نظر تہذیب اخلاق در صف اقوام ترقی یافتہ جا گرفتند" ۔

Allama Iqbal visited Kashmir valley perhaps for the first time in July, 1921. It was here that struck with indescribable poverty of the Muslims he wrote the famous verses quoted below:—

کشمیری کہ با بندگی خو گرفتہ — بتے مے تراشد ز سنگ مزارے
ضمیرش تہی از خیال بلندے — خودی ناشناسے زخود شرمسارے
بریشم قبا خواجہ از محنت او — نصیب تنش جامہ تار تارے
نہ در دیدہ او فروغ نگاہے — نہ در سینہ او دل بے قرارے
ازاں مے فشاں قطرہ بر کشیری — کہ خاکسترش آفریند شرارے [1]

In a letter addressed to Munshi Mohammad Din Fauq who had dedicated his life to the cause of the uplift of his fellow Kashmirians, Allama Iqbal wrote:—

"ہندوستان میں سب سے پہلے اور سب سے زیادہ اس ملک کو بیدار کرنے کی ضرورت ہے ، اس لیے کہ اگر اس ملک کے لوگ بیدار ہو گئے تو وہ انشاء اللہ سارے ہندوستان کی ترجمانی کریں گے"[2]

Iqbal was emotionally involved in the Movement for Muslim advancement in Kashmir. In all his poetic works, he has given vent to his feelings and drawn a vivid picture of the sufferings of his Kashmiri brethren under the tyrannical rule of the Dogras. He always did his best to find time from his busy life to participate in the meetings of the Anjuman-e-Kashmiri Mussalmanan-e-Punjab and later, the All India Muslim Kashmiri Conference

1 Payam-i-Mashriq.
2 Tarikh-e-Aqwam-e-Kashmir.

and very often had specially composed poems to recite. Given below are some verses that have been preserved in the writings of Mr. Fauq and saved from being lost:—

(۱) کہکشاں میں آکے اختر مل گئے　　اک لڑی میں آکے گوہر مل گئے
واہ واہ کیا محفل احباب ہے　　ہموطن غربت میں آ کر مل گئے

(۲) موتی عدن سے لعل یمن سے ہوا ہے دور　　یا نافہ غزال ختن سے ہوا ہے دور
ہندوستان میں آئے ہیں کشمیر چھوڑ کر　　بلبل نے آشیانہ بنایا چمن سے دور

(۳) سوتدابیر کی اے قوم یہ ہے اک تدبیر　　چشم اغیار میں بڑھتی ہے اسی سے توقیر
در مطلب ہے اخوت کے صدف میں پنہان　　مل کے دنیا میں رہو مثل حروف کشمیر

(۴) پنجہ ظلم و جہالت نے برا حال کیا　　بن کے مقراض ہمیں بے پروبال کیا
توڑ اس دست جفا کیش کو یارب جس نے　　روح آزادئی کشمیر کو پامال کیا

Among others who were associated with this organisation, from time to time, were Nawab Sir Salimullah Khan and Nawab Habibullah Khan from Dacca, Syed Mohsin Shah, Advocate, Khawaja Amir-ud-Din, Sheikh Jan Mohammad Ganai, Khawaja Feroz-ud-Din Ahmad, Bar-at-Law, Lahore, Sheikh Din Mohammad, later Governor of Sind, and his brother Sheikh Atta Mohammad, Advocate, Gujranwala. According to the available records, the office bearers for the year 1924-25 were as follows:—

1. Sheikh Atta Mohammad, Advocate — *President, Central Standing Committee.*
2. Syed Mohsin Shah, Advocate — *General Secretary.*
3. Khawaja Feroz-ud-Din Ahmad, Bar-at-Law. — *Joint Secretary.*
4. Munshi Mohammad Din Fauq — *Assistant Secretary.*
5. Khawaja Ghulam Nabi — *Finance Secretary.*
6. Khawaja Sadrud Din — *Honorary Secretary.*

The Association also rendered financial assistance to private Maktabs run by local Muslims in parts of the Valley. Financial assistance by way of interest-free loans was also given to promising students who were unable to pursue their studies on account of poverty. Complete figures are not available now except for the year

1924-25 when twenty scholarships amounting to Rs. 3,000/- were sanctioned by the Committee. The records also show that a sum of Rs. 25,000/- was spent on scholarships during a period of twelve years ending with 1924.[1] The requisite funds were raised through voluntary subscriptions from amongst members and non-members but exclusively from the Kashmiri Muslim community in northern India.

It was mainly due to the efforts of the Association that the Government of India deputed its Educational Commissioner Mr. Sharp to Srinagar in 1916 to enquire into the grievances of Muslims in the field of education.

In 1927, the Maharajah's government asked for applications for the grant of scholarships for studies abroad but not a single Muslim was selected. All their applications were rejected. Syed Mohsin Shah, General Secretary, lodged a strong protest with the Maharaja.[2]

In a public meeting held under the auspices of the Majlis-e-Khilafat, Amritsar, under the presidentship of Saif-ud-Din Kitchlu, the repression of the Srinagar Silk Factory labour was severely condemned. It was addressed, among others, by Mr. Pir Mohammad, Abdus Salam Hamdani, Sh. Hisam-ud-Din, Hassan Mir, Editor Ziafat-i-Panch and Syed Atta Ullah Shah Bukhari. An amendment introduced by Mr. Hassan Mir condemning the British Government for its neglect and inattention, was unanimously accepted.[3]

The Cause of Muslim Kashmir was also taken up by leading Muslim newspapers of the sub-continent particularly 'Inquilab', 'Al-Fazal', 'Siyasat' 'Al-Aman', 'Sun Rise', 'Eastern Times', 'Muslim Outlook', 'Zamindar' and 'The Light'. Together they commanded a large circulation. For historical reasons, Muslims of the sub-continent have been dedicated believers in the concept of international Muslim fraternity; so when the concept of Pan-Islamism took birth in its present shape after the unjust treatment meted out to the Muslim Caliphate in Turkey, Muslims from one end of the country to the other, gave it a ready and enthusiastic response. It was not, therefore, unusual that the sufferings of the Muslims of Kashmir under Hindu rule should have caused resentment in Muslim India and these newspapers should have been successful in creating a strong public opinion by the time the Movement for reforms inside the State took the shape of a popular revolt in July, 1931.

1 Fugan-i-Kashmir, 1926.
2 Inquilab, 15th Oct. 1927.
3 Zamindar, 27th Sep. 1924.

On 8th July, in a meeting of leading Muslims held in Lahore, it was decided to observe a Kashmir Day on 10th July. It was also decided to observe an All India Kashmir Day on 24th July. The Working Committee of the Anjuman-i-Islamia, Punjab, in a resolution, rejected the Wakefield Enquiry Committee report regarding Tauheen-i-Quran as unsatisfactory and unacceptable. On 15th July, Muslims of Lahore held a public meeting outside Mochi Gate which was addressed by Malik Barkat Ali Advocate, Maulana Mohammad Yaqub, Editor Light, Niaz Ali Advocate and Mian Fazal Karim. A committee comprising Maulana Mohammad Yaqub as President, Maulana Illam Din Salik as Secretary and Maulanas, Abdul Majid Qarshi and Mohammad Bakhsh Muslim as members, was constituted to arrange for the 24th July public meeting.[1]

THE ALL INDIA KASHMIR COMMITTEE

The news about the 13th July indiscriminate and unprovoked firing outside Central Jail Srinagar reached Lahore on the 16th evening and was published in the Muslim press on the 17th morning. About seven to eight thousand protest telegrams were sent to the Maharaja by Muslim individuals and organisations from all over India. Thousands of telegrams were also addressed to the Viceroy urging immediate intervention. It was after the receipt of a telegram from the Viceroy, reported to be strongly-worded, that the Maharaja invited Muslim representatives to meet him on 16th August.[2]

The publication of the news sent a wave of indignation all over Muslim India resulting in protest meetings and processions almost in every city, town and important village, expressing their sympathy and solidarity with the Muslims of Kashmir and calling upon the British Government to depose Hari Singh and take the State under its direct administration. Press statements were issued by all prominent Muslim leaders condemning the outrage and assuring Kashmiri Muslims of their full support.

Hundreds of poems appeared in newspapers in condemnation of the firing which were recited to huge crowds. In fact, two of them, one by Abdul Majid Salik, Editor daily Inquilab Lahore and the other by Agha Hashar Kashmiri, are remembered even to this day and are still heard from public pulpits.

As there was no central organisation to co-ordinate these activities in various parts of the country, Mirza Bashir-ud-Din Mahmud Ahmad, Amir of the Jamaat-e-Ahmedia, taking initiative, convened a meeting of some

1 & 2 Inquilab, 12th & 23rd August 1931.

of the leading Muslims at Simla on 25th July, 1931, to consider the situation. The meeting was held at Fair View, the Simla residence of Sir Zulfikar Ali Khan of Malirkotla. It was attended by the following:[1]

1. Sir Sheikh Mohammad Iqbal.
2. Mirza Bashir-ud-Din Mahmud Ahmed.
3. Sir Zulfikar Ali.
4. Khawaja Hassan Nizami.
5. Nawab of Kunjpura.
6. Syed Mohsin Shah, Advocate.
7. Khan Bahadur Sheikh Rahim Bakhsh.
8. Maulana Mohammad Ismail Ghaznavi.
9. Maulana Abdur Rahim Dard.
10. Maulana Noor-ul-Haq, proprietor Muslim Outlook.
11. Syed Mohammad Habib, proprietor Siyasat.
12. Sahibzada Abdul Latif, brother of Sir Abdul Qayyum from N.W.F.P.

The dignatories expressed their grave concern over the mass killings and assured the Muslims of Kashmir of the full moral and material support of the Muslims of India in their struggle. The meeting took the following decisions:—

1. An All India Kashmir Committee was set up with Mirza Bashir-ud-Din Mahmud Ahmed as President and Maulvi Abdur Rahim Dard as Secretary to forge a common platform for co-ordination of the movement that had so spontaneously sprung up in India immediately after the 13th of July.
2. The Committee was to campaign both at home and abroad for the redress of the grievances of Kashmiri Muslims.
3. The 14th of August was declared as Kashmir Day and an appeal was issued to Muslims to organise processions and hold public meetings as a demonstration of solidarity with the Muslims of Kashmir.

As the work of the Committee progressed and its formation became known in the country, the following leaders were also co-opted as members:—[2]

1. Mr. H. S. Suhrawardy (later Premier of Pakistan), Calcutta.
2. Haji Abdullah Haroon, M.L.A. Karachi.

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1 Inquilab, 29th July 1931.
2 Zahur Ahmad, p. 65-66.

3. Doctor Shafaat Ahmed Khan, M.L.C. Allahabad.

4. Maulana Hasrat Mohani, one-time President Muslim League.

5. Maulana Yaqub Khan, Editor "Light", Lahore.

6. Maulana Mohammad Shafi Daudi, Patna.

7. Sahibzada Abu Zafar Wajihud Din, Calcutta.

8. Doctor Zia-ud-Din Ahmed, M.L.A., later Vice Chancellor, Aligarh.

9. Mian Jaffar Shah, later a Minister in the League Government, Peshawar.

10. Syed Mirak Shah Deobandi.

11. Maulana Mir Mohammad Ibrahim of Ahl-i-Hadis, Sialkot.

12. Maulana Abdul Hamid Zafar (later Bhashani of Bangla Desh).

13. Maulana Ghulam Rasul Mehr.

14. Maulana Abdul Majid Salik.

15. Maulana Mazhar-ud-Din.

16. Maulana Noor-ul-Haq.

The Committee:—

(*a*) Gave financial assistance to the dependents of jailed political leaders, martyrs and those wounded in the firing;

(*b*) It gave financial support to the agitation;

(*c*) It arranged for the medical treatment of the injured;

(*d*) It arranged legal defence for political workers;

(*e*) It provided legal assistance in the preparation of cases before the Middleton and Glancy Commissions.

On 3rd August, Secretary Kashmir Committee telegraphically requested the Maharaja to receive a deputation consisting of Sir Zulfikar Ali Khan,

Nawab Mohammad Ibrahim Khan of Kunjpura, Khawaja Hassan Nizami, Khan Bahadur Sheikh Ibrahim and Maulana Ismail Ghaznavi; the permission was refused. Another telegram sent by President of the Committee to reconsider it, also had no effect. On 17th July, a Kashmir Committee was formed in Sialkot. Among its members were Sheikh Abdul Qadir, Bar-at-Law, Mr. Abdus Sami Pal and Maulvi Mohammad Ibrahim. The same night a public meeting was held under the presidentship of Abdus Salam. A second public meeting was held on 24th July under the presidentship of Mr. Ghulam Haider.

14th AUGUST 1932—KASHMIR DAY

The appeal issued by the All India Kashmir Committee for the holding of public meetings and processions on 14th August was signed among others by Allama Iqbal, Mr. H.S. Suhrawardy, Maulana Abu Zafar Waji-ud-Din, Maulana Hasrat Mohani, Mian Jafar Shah and Shafaat Ahmed Khan.

Kashmir Day was first observed in Peshawar on 20th July, in Cawnpore on 28th July and in Lahore on the 24th. Huge processions were taken out which terminated in mass meetings addressed by local Muslim leaders; resolutions were passed supporting the demands of Kashmiri Muslims. On 14th August, thousands of meetings were held all over India. A pamphlet was circulated in thousands containing demands which included the setting up of a Legislative Assembly. It may be noted that this demand was made for the first time. In Bombay, the meeting was presided over by Maulana Shaukat Ali. The procession, reported by the local press as the biggest in the history of the city, was controlled by one thousand uniformed volunteers. In Patna, the procession was led and the meeting presided over by Maulana Shafi Daudi.

According to the files of the Daily Inquilab, public meetings were held throughout the sub-continent. In Jhelum, it was presided over by Mohammad Bashir, Pleader; in Deoband it was addressed by Maulana Mohammad Tayyab, Maulana Hussain Ahmed and Syed Mirak Shah; in Calcutta, the meeting was addressed by Mr. Shaheed Suhrawardy, Abdul Haleem Ghaznavi, Mr. Abu Tahir and Maulana Abdur Rauf; in the southernmost town of Calicut, a public meeting was held under the auspices of the Central Muslim Association; Mr. K. K. Pokar presided. In Sialkot, a procession participated by about sixty thousand Muslims, all of whom were bare-headed, was taken out from Shah Channan. Complete hartal was observed in the city. A public meeting held at the termination of the procession was presided over by Mr. Ghulam Haider and addressed by Malik Ziaullah, Khawaja Hakim Din, Ismatullah, Noor Hussain, Abdul Latif, Mohammad Ali, Karam Ellahi, Advocate and Khawaja Feroz-ud-Din,

Advocate. In Lahore, Muslims observed a complete hartal. The procession which started at 6 p.m. from outside Delhi gate, was participated by about a lac of Muslims. Volunteer corps from Muslim Ittehad Water Works, Children corps, Sitara-i-Hind corps, Anjuman-e-Naujawanan-i-Islam, Anjuman-i-Dawat-i-Sulat, Mohammad Ali Corps, Jamiat-ul-Muslimeen, Anjuman-e-Ahmedia, Takia Sadhu Corps and other groups, numbering twenty and in uniforms, formed its vanguard. Almost all important Muslim leaders participated. Outside Mochi Gate and at two other places, the processionists mourned the martyrs of Kashmir. Allama Iqbal, who presided over the meeting, recited some specially composed verses. It was also addressed, among others, by Khalifa Shuja-ud-Din, Syed Mohsin Shah, Sheikh Azimullah, Malik Abdul Aziz, Meraj-ud-Din, Maulana Daud Ghaznavi, Maulvi Fazal Karim and Chaudhri Mohammad Rafique. At Dehra Dun the meeting was presided over by Syed Mujtaba Hussain while at Monghir it was presided over by Khan Bahadur Shah Mohammad Yahya M.L.C. At Gaya, the meeting was presided over by Hafiz Mohammad Rafique. At Aligarh, Haji Mohammad Saleh Sherwani presided over the meeting while Doctor Attaullah Butt and Hafiz Mohammad Usman delivered speeches. At Agra a procession was taken out with black flags; the public meeting was presided over by Mehdi Haq Sahib while Basharat Hussain was the principal speaker. A public meeting was held at Wana in the tribal area. Mir Moazzam Shah presided. It was addressed by Abdul Aziz, a college student and Maulvi Abdul Latif. An eight-year old child Shah Abdur Rashid also addressed the meeting and offered his life for the Cause of Kashmir. At Montgomery, a ladies' meeting was held at Qadir Manzil which was addressed by Mahmooda Begum. At Gujrat complete hartal was observed in the city. A procession was taken out in the afternoon which started from Jamia Masjid and was preceded by dozens of horsemen with unsheathed swords as if marching towards a battle. The procession terminated at 4 p.m. and a public meeting was held at 9 p.m. under the presidentship of Chaudhri Abdullah Khan, Chairman of the Municipal Committee. At Karachi the public meeting was presided over by Haji Seth Abdullah Haroon while at Baqar Ganj, it was presided over by Maulvi Hasham Ali. In Allahabad, the home town of Pandit Nehru, the public meeting was presided over by Abdul Hassan Jafri; it was held in the Mohammad Ali Park. At Hyderabad (Sind), the meeting was presided over by Sir Ghulam Mujadid. At Montgomery, the Anjuman-e-Islamia arranged a procession which was joined by all Muslim lawyers, members of the Municipal Committee and the District Board. It was headed by a group of volunteers raising slogans of "Kashmir Chalo". It may be recalled that this slogan had become the popular rallying cry in Muslim India in their movement launched in support of the Muslims of Kashmir. At Simla, which was then the seat of the Viceroy, a procession was taken out which termina-

ted in a public meeting at Jamia Masjid; Hassan Imam, Bar-at-Law and member of the Council of State, presided. A procession was taken out in Mangalore, again in extreme south, which was headed by volunteers of the Mohammad Ali corps. A meeting was held at Masjid-e-Azam which was presided over by Mahmood Sharif Khan. In Peshawar, the main public meeting was held at Masjid-e-Mahabat Khan, which was addressed by Khan Mohammad Salim Khan. In Delhi, a bare-headed procession was taken out which terminated in a public meeting at Jamia Masjid. In Poona, the meeting was addressed by Abdul Baqi, Syed Ashraf Ali and Abdur Razzaq. In Commilla, now Bangla Desh, the meeting was presided over by Mr. Daulat Ahmed. Doctor Mirza Hameedullah Beg presided over the meeting at Jullundhur Cantt. At Lucknow, a meeting was held at Aminudaullah Park under the presidentship of Munshi Mahmood Ali. In Rangoon, the public meeting was presided over by Maulana Ahmad Ashraf. A meeting of Muslim women was held at Hyderabad (Deccan) at the residence of Begum Seth Abdullah Allah Din. Another meeting of Muslim women was held at Sikandarabad at the residence of Begum Syed Humayun Mirza. A meeting of women held at Sialkot and chaired by Fazilat Khatoon was addressed by Mahmooda Hamad, Saeeda Ulfat, Saeeda Ismat and Zainab Bibi. Another meeting of Muslim women was held at Athwal which was addressed by Muneera Begum. Public meetings were also held at Sargodha, Bhagalpur, Jhang, Shahjahanpur, Lyallpur, Rangpur (Bangla Desh), Cuttock (Orrisa), Balasur, Devlali, Mansehra, Karnal, Hazro, Kunjah, Kohat, Narowal, Tarangzai, Chowinda, Ajnala, Mandi Bhalwal, Ludhiana, Ambala, Nowshera Cantt, Gurdaspur, Mussouri, Arwal, Jhandhanwala, Karnal, Panipat, Kalanoor, Meerut, Bhini, Hoshiarpur, Fateh Jung, Mandi Bahaudin, Muradabad, Okara, Saharanpur, Dera Ghazi Khan, Zafarwal, Bhera, Shahdara, Chakwal, Rohtak and hundreds of other places.

The day was observed with great enthusiasm all over the State, especially in Kashmir valley. In Srinagar, Muslims observed a complete hartal. Three public meetings were held in the city, the biggest at the Jamia Masjid which was attended by about fifty thousand men and women. Chaudhri Ghulam Abbas made his first speech in the Valley on this day when he read from a prepared text in Urdu. Two boys recited a Kashmiri poem. It was also addressed by Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, Maulvi Abdur Rahim and Mistri Yaqub Ali. A public meeting was held in the Jamia Masjid Gulmarg which was presided over by Jalal-ud-Din. In Shopian, complete hartal was observed and a procession taken out which terminated in a public meeting held under the presidentship of Mir Waiz Maulana Ghulam Hassan. Mir Waiz Maulvi Mohammad Abdullah recited a persian poem in memory of the martyrs. Mr. Ghulam Rasool also recited a poem. In Bandipura no public meeting could be held

as section 144 had been clamped down. The town, however, observed a complete hartal.

The Kashmir Committee held a meeting in Sialkot on 12th and 13th September, 1931. Another meeting was held in Lahore on 24-10-1931. By this time the Dogra Government had appointed the Dalal Commission of which mention has already been made elsewhere. The Committee rejected its appointment as inadequate and unsatisfactory.

The Committee also arranged for the publication of Kashmir news in British newspapers such as Ring Post, Sunday Times and Daily Telegraph, London. They supported the demands of Kashmiri Muslims for the expulsion of Hari Kishan Kaul and the introduction of reforms. Maulana Farzand Ali, Imam of the London Mosque, organised the campaign in London. The matter was raised in the British Parliament several times. The Chairman of the Committee had a meeting first with the Political Secretary of the Government of India, incharge of the States and later called on the Viceroy and impressed upon him the urgent necessity of introducing reforms. He also met the Governor of Punjab. Sir Sikandar Hayat Khan was also helpful in projecting the Muslim point of view.

Khan Bahadur Rahim Bakhsh, a member of the Committee, was then staying in Cecil Hotel, Simla. His immediate neighbour was one Mr. Lani, a representative of Statesman and the London Times etc. He was instrumental in getting news about Kashmir published in the London press through the courtesy of his neighbour.

Sir Mohammad Iqbal, Sir Agha Khan, Maulana Mohammad Shafi Daudi and Sir Mohammad Zafarullah Khan, while in London in connection with the Round Table Conference, met the Secretary of State for India in connection with the situation in Kashmir.

The Kashmir Committee deputed a number of lawyers to defend hundreds of Muslims who were being tried on charges of murder, arson and rioting. Sheikh Bashir Ahmed, Advocate who later rose to be a Judge of the Lahore High Court, first defended the Shopian case. Chaudhri Aziz Ahmed Bajwah was sent to Jammu. Mir Mohammad Bakhsh and Maulvi Ghulam Mustafa, Bar-at-Law, Gujranwala also worked at Jammu. Chaudhri Mohammad Assadullah Khan was sent to Mirpur. Sir Mohammad Zafarullah Khan was also associated with several trials. Sheikh Mohammad Ahmed, Advocate, Kapurthala, Qazi Abdul Hamid,

Advocate, Amritsar, and Chaudhri Yusuf Khan, Advocate, Gurdaspur also appeared for the defence. Chaudhri Ismatullah appeared before the tribunal at Mirpur, Bhimber, Nowshera, Rajouri and Jammu. Chaudhri Assadullah conducted the cases in the High Court. With decrease in the work-load at Jammu, Mir Mohammad Bakhsh alone dealt with the Court work while Mr. Mustafa and Mr. Aziz, Advocates took up the presentation of the case before the Middleton and Glancy Commissions. Lt. Mohammad Ishaque acted as their Secretary.

After Mr. Glancy presented his report, the Government unncessarily delayed the implementation of its recommendations. The Muslims thought that it was not perhaps fully happy with the report and wanted to avoid its implementation. Therefore, on 4th April, 1932, a deputation of the All India Kashmir Committee, consisting of Doctor Shafaat Ahmed Khan, Maulana Mohammad Shafi Daudi, Mr. A. H. Ghaznavi, Nawab Abdul Hafiz Khan, Captain Sir Sher Mohammad Khan of Domeli, Jhelum, Nawab Ibrahim Ali Khan of Kunjpura, Shah Masud Ahmed, Doctor Mirza Yaqub Beg, Khan Bahadur Rahim Bakhsh, Syed Mohsin Shah, Sheikh Fazal Haq Piracha, Syed Habib Shah and Maulana Abdur Rahim Dard, led by Sir Zafrullah Khan, met the Viceroy in New Delhi and put forth the following demands:

1. Immediate implementation of the recommendations made by the Glancy Inquiry Commission.

2. Increased representation for Muslims on the Glancy Committee on Constitutional Reforms.

3. Release of all political prisoners.

4. Immediate stoppage of the migration of State Muslims to Punjab.

The Viceroy was also told that to proceed with the determination of the question of political reforms, while leaders of public opinion were in jail, was meaningless and could hardly be expected to carry any weight with their followers, for whose satisfaction the Committee had been appointed. The Viceroy seems to have advised the deputation to take up these matters with the Kashmir Government. It was obviously understood that he was to use his influence with the latter. A deputation of the Committee consisting of Syed Mohsin Shah, Advocate, Maulana Mohammad Yaqub Khan, Mr. Majid Malik, Maulana Mirak Shah and Maulana Dard therefore met Col. Colvin, Prime Minister at Jammu on 23rd April 1932 and presented the following demands:—

1. Witndrawal of all repressive Ordinances.

2. Release of all political prisoners.

3. Impartial enquiry into the misconduct of officers at Baramula, Sopore, Handwara, Kotli and Rajouri.

4. Appointment of at least two Muslim Ministers commanding confidence of the community.

5. Adequate representation for Muslims in the proposed State Assembly.

AHRAR'S KASHMIR CHALO MOVEMENT

While the All India Kashmir Committee was thus engaged in a constitutional struggle for getting the grievances of Kashmiri Muslims redressed and for justice being done to them, the Ahrar organisation in Punjab had different plans though with the same end in view. Being avowedly anti-British and having spent many years of their lives in British jails, the Ahrar leadership, equally genuinely, believed that the type of agitation carried on by the All India Kashmir Committee did not provide an answer to the situation. By their very training, were they prone to think in those terms. The fact that the All India Kashmir Committee was headed by Amir of the Ahmedi Jamaat, that its Secretary was also an Ahmedi and that the campaign was being conducted mainly with the funds provided by Ahmedis, was considered by them as an unhappy sign from the religious point of view. There had been acute differences between the Ahmedis and the general body of Muslims. There was a section of Muslims, Ahrars included—who did not take kindly to the Kashmir agitation for reforms being led or conducted in Punjab by the Ahmedis. One reason was that it provided the latter with an opportunity to reach the general mass of Muslims on a question that stirred their hearts and thus enabled them to establish their bonafides. There were also elements who thought that the Ahmedis thereby wanted to make inroads in the Valley and then use it as a base to spread their influence in northern India. The Ahrars also seem to have thought that the Ahmedis, being wedded, as a matter of fundamental policy, to loyalty to the British crown, could not revolutionise the situation or go beyond certain limits which according to their light, did not furnish the requisite answer to the dictates of the situation. They also seem to have believed that it afforded them (Ahmedis) an opportunity of mass contact as well as of winning the respect of the Muslim masses. Therefore, they decided not to associate themselves with the All India Kashmir Committee but, nevertheless, make their contribution, indepen-



Ghazi Elahi Bakhsh

dently. Incidentally a great many leaders of the Ahrar Party were descendants of the Kashmiris who had migrated from the State on account of the Sikh-Hindu oppression.

They therefore decided to storm the State with what may be called, a civil invasion by sending in a mass of volunteers and thus involve not only the British Government but also exhaust the resources of the State. Consequently, towards the middle of September, some volunteers started entering the State from different directions but before the movement could gain momentum, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah was released on 4th October and the way cleared for presentation of a memorandum. Under these circumstances, it was only natural that the Ahrars should have suspended their Movement. Meanwhile negotiations began in Srinagar between the Ahrars and the Kashmir Government which, however, broke down towards the end of October. The Kashmir Government had also not taken any steps to indicate that it was willing to accept the Muslim demands. Therefore, the Ahrars again started their movement in late October with Sialkot as the principal base camp.

Ahrar volunteers also entered Mirpur via Jhelum. On the entry of some volunteers through this route, one Ellahi Bakhsh, a volunteer from Chiniot, was bayoneted by a Dogra Police Inspector, Vishva Mitter. The young man died on the spot in great pain. Had he been removed to the hospital immediately, his life may have been saved but no such effort at all was made by the army or the police on duty. He was the first Muslim martyr from India to lay down his life in the Cause of Kashmiri Muslims and the second man from outside the State to do so, having been already preceded by Mr. Thorpe. Years later, Ghazi Ellahi Bakhsh successfully managed to get his nose chopped off as a reprisal.

When the news of the murder of Ellahi Bakhsh became known, Muslim Punjab was almost in flames and volunteers started pouring into Sialkot from all over the country. Some of them came from places as far away as Lucknow and Calcutta. Master Taj-ud-Din Ansari and other Ahrar leaders toured Bengal, U.P., Delhi and other places. Taj-ud-Din was arrested at Ludhiana. Within three days, thirty six hundred volunteers were arrested in Jammu city alone. A batch of twenty one volunteers used to leave Sialkot for Jammu at brief intervals. The first batch was led by Maulana Mazhar Ali Azhar. He was arrested alongwith the volunteers, summarily tried and sentenced to two years imprisonment. He had earlier returned from Srinagar alongwith Master Taj-ud-Din Ansari where they had gone at the invitation of the State Government to negotiate a settlement; the negotiations, however, failed. Within seven days, ten thousand volunteers entered the State in this sector alone. A few days

after the death of Ellahi Bakhsh, a batch of thirty volunteers, headed by Khawaja Ghulam Mohammad, came to Kohala and captured the bridge. They had taken an oath to accomplish their job, no matter what the consequences. In the struggle for its capture, many a volunteer got severely injured. The Dogra army on duty very wisely did not resort to firing as it was bound to have brought a quick response from the otherwise peaceful surroundings and given the Movement a new turn which would not have been at all to the advantage of the Dogra Government. Traffic remained suspended for two days. A few days later, six volunteers from Lucknow, led by Ghazi Munney Khan, entered the State via Gurdaspur. This front had to be abandoned because of the poor means of communication and also because the entire area was overwhelmingly inhabited by Hindus. Agha Shorish Kashmiri, then a lad of hardly 17 years, led a determined batch to Kohala and when prevented by the army from crossing the bridge, plunged into the fast running waters of Jhelum and swam it ashore.

The Maharaja found that his administration was crumbling and that his resources were too inadequate to meet the situation created by the mass entry of these determined volunteers. So he requested the Viceroy for intervention and assistance. An Ordinance was promptly issued investing the Punjab Governor with special powers to deal with the emergency. British forces together with many an officer from the Political department were immediately despatched to the State to take control of the situation.

While the Movement was thus in progress, a Muslim youth was killed by Hindus in the course of a procession taken out in Lahore in connection with Kashmir. A day later, Muslims retaliated and a few Hindus were killed. The Government arrested Illam Din, Chief Salar of the Ahrar volunteers but he was found innocent by the Court and acquitted. A meeting was convened towards the end of November by Sir Sikandar Hayat Khan at his residence. It was attended, among others, by Mirza Bashir-ud-Din Mahmud Ahmed, Syed Mohsin Shah, Maulana Afzal Haq, Nawab Muzaffar Ali Qizilbash and Malik Barkat Ali as a representative of the Muslim League. Sir Sikandar conveyed, on behalf of the Government of India, the announcement made by the Kashmir Government at the instance of the former about the appointment of the Glancy Commission. While the Ahrars rejected the announcement on the spot, others sought time to consider its implications.

The Government then convened a meeting of the Ahrar Working Committee at Borstal jail, Lahore. The members were collected from various jails. Chaudhri Afzal Haq, President of the Ahrar Party who

was out of jail, due to illness, had several meetings with his colleagues. The Committee was unwilling to call off the movement so long as the demands of Kashmiri Muslims were not met by the State Government.

After the promulgation of the Ordinance by the Governor-General, the entry of Ahrar volunteers was banned and they were arrested on the British Indian soil. About forty five thousand Muslims from Punjab and five thousand from other provinces, mainly from Delhi, U.P., Bihar, Bengal and C.P., were arrested during a period of hardly three months. It may be noted that in no Congress movement, including the Quit India agitation of 1942, did the number of detenus in any year exceed eighty thousand, but here fifty thousand were arrested during three months only and that also when the agitation remained mainly confined to Punjab as it was considered sufficiently resourceful to meet the demand for volunteers. According to the official Ahrar sources,[1] twenty-one volunteers died in Punjab jails due to fever and cold. The normal accommodation in Punjab prisons was exceeded four times. The widow of Chaudhri Abdus Sattar of Ferozepur, a member of the Ferozepur Municipality and a noted public figure who died in the midst of the Movement, stepped into his shoes, was sentenced to six months imprisonment and placed in C class. Her brother-in-law, Abdul Haq, was a practising Barrister.

MUSLIM LEAGUE'S TRADITIONAL SUPPORT

The two major political parties, Congress and Muslim League had adopted, generally, a policy of non-intervention in the affairs of Indian States. This was unfortunate. Actually the policy originated with the Indian National Congress mainly because the overwhelming majority of the 562 State rulers, were Hindus and most of them, like Hari Singh, were sympathetic to its brand of nationalism. The policy of non-intervention was bound to work harshly against one-fourth of the sub-continent's total population who lived in these States because the Princes were thus left free to treat their subjects as they pleased so long as they remained personally loyal to the Congress creed. Some even financed the Congress. Another reason for adopting this policy was that the astute Congress leadership, acutely conscious of the likelihood of a Hindu-Muslim civil war on the exit of the British in view of their traditional hostility (the Pakistan Resolution had not as yet been adopted by the All India Muslim League), wanted to rely on the private armies maintained by the Hindu Princes.

The All India Muslim League, however, did not fully subscribe to this policy and its record clearly shows that so far as Kashmir is concerned, it

1 Ahrar and Kashmir.

did not remain inactive and from time to time took cognizance of the happenings inside the State. As early as 1918, the following resolution was unanimously adopted at its Delhi session held on 30th and 31st December, 1918:—

> "The All India Muslim League begs to draw the attention of the Kashmir Durbar to the hardships suffered by the Mussalmans of Kashmir under the system of the collection of revenue in kind and appeals to the Ruler to appoint a Commission to investigate their complaints.
>
> The League requests the Durbar to hand over the Pathar Mosque to the Mussalmans, and places on record its deep regret at its constant desecration.
>
> The League also regrets to point out that the imposition of begar on Mussalmans alone is a great injustice to them and should be put an end to immediately."[1]

In the fifteenth session of the All India Muslim League held at Lahore on 25th May, 1924, the following resolution, proposed by Pir Taj-ud-Din and seconded by Mr. Mohammad Sadiq, was unanimously carried:—

> "The All India Muslim League greatly deplores the continued unsympathetic and indifferent attitude of the Kashmir Durbar towards the political and educational needs and aspirations of the Mussalmans of Kashmir State, and resolves that in view of the grave situation existing in Kashmir, a special sub-committee of the All India Muslim League be formed to find out ways and means for uplifting the poor and downtrodden Mussalman community of that State, and to bring home to the Kashmir Durbar the paramount necessity of providing special facilities of educating the Mussalmans of the State, and ameliorating their present helpless condition, and to give the Mussalmans of Kashmir, who form 95 per cent of the population of the State, their rightful place in the public services and in the administration of the State."[2]

The attitude of the All India Muslim League was not negative. When the Kashmir Government enacted the Agriculturists Relief Act, the measure was officially welcomed by the League. The following resolution moved by Doctor Kitchlew and seconded by Khawaja Gul Mohammad was passed at its eighteenth session held at Delhi from the 29th to 31st of December, 1926:—

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1 Pirzada, p. 602.
2 G. Allana, p. 56.

"The All India Muslim League expresses its gratification at the enactment of the Agriculturists Relief Act by His Highness the Maharaja Bahadur of Kashmir with a view to ameliorate the present deplorable condition of the Agricultural population of the State." [1]

The 22nd session of the All India Muslim League held at Delhi, adopted the following resolution:—

"This meeting of the League, while expressing its deepest sympathy with the position of the Muslims of Kashmir, and putting on record its sense of satisfaction at the practical proofs given by the Muslims of India of their common brotherhood with the suffering of Muslims of Kashmir, earnestly hopes that the gallant struggle which is being carried on, both inside and outside Kashmir, shall speedily result in securing to the Muslims of Kashmir those rights of humanity and citizenship for which such enormous sacrifices have been made."[2]

Addressing the 26th session of the League at Patna held between the 26th and 29th of December, 1938, Quaid-e-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah made the following pertinent observations in his presidential address:—

"I would ask the Congress, what is it doing in Kashmir? The Arya Samajists, the Hindu Mahasabha and the Congress nationalists, as also the Press, the subservient Press of the Congress, why are they silent about the affairs of Kashmir State? Is it because Kashmir is a Hindu State? Is it because the vast majority of the Indian subjects of Kashmir State are Muslims? I have no doubt about the real meaning of the Congress solicitude for the people of the Indian States.

Mr. Subhash Chandra Bose has said in one of his speeches that the Congress wants to make an alliance with the people of the Indian States. May I ask: do they want to make an alliance only with those who are Hindus or also with the Mussalmans?"[3]

Speaking in the session, Mr. Mushtaq Ahmed, Parliamentary Secretary Punjab said that the Congress had directed its "Home Department—Hindu Mahasabha" to take steps to bring the States under its influence. He added that the Congress kept its eyes shut towards the

1 Pirzada, p. 100.
2 Allana, p. 95.
3 Pirzada, p. 307.

rights of Muslims in Kashmir. He accused the Congress of "suffering from a minority phobia", and of "trying to suppress the Muslims in every conceivable manner, both in British India and the Indian States".

Given below are a few extracts from Muslim and British-controlled newspapers:—

London Times, quoted from Statesman by Daily Inquilab dated the 12th December, 1931, commented:—

> "The Muslim demands are wholly correct; their complaints are well founded and their sincerity is above board. The manner in which they have framed their demands clearly shows that they do not demand more than they deserve and this is the greatest proof of their cause being just. The defects in the State administration are due to the fact that Muslims have no voice in the Maharaja's Cabinet and there is no one to enquire into their grievances. While the Maharaja has started efforts to remove illiteracy and economic disparity, he should also see that Muslims are represented in the Cabinet and their legal and constitutional rights are not denied to them."

Wrote the Daily Statesman, quoted by Al-Aman Delhi, dated 28-10-1931:

> "When Muslims demand that there should be improvement in the administration of Kashmir, every intelligent and fair minded person should support their demand but we find that it is not so. On the other hand there are people who not only oppose them but also support the Maharaja."

Tayagbholi, Ajmere, dated 23rd November, 1931 commented:

> "There is no doubt that Muslims of the State live under deplorable conditions......there is no doubt also that they deserve pity. They have every right to represent their grievances to the Government and compel their acceptance."

HINDU INDIA CONDEMNS THE MOVEMENT

It is unfortunate that pro-congress newspaper records pertaining to 1931, to say the least of the period preceding it, have not been available to me anywhere, otherwise a voluminous book could be compiled about the pro-Maharaja role played by the Congress and its press. According to

Master Taj-ud-Din, a pro-Congress Ahrar leader all through his active life, Mahatama Gandhi said in a statement at the height of the popular movement against the Maharaja that "Congress should not interfere in the affairs of the State". The statement was issued to strengthen the hands of the Maharaja and to condemn the support Muslim-Kashmir was receiving from Muslim India. The Muslim "nationalists" in Punjab immediately withdrew their support and resigned from the offices they held in Committees that had sprung up in their towns.

The following extract from an editorial in the pro-Congress Daily Tribune, Lahore, dated 7th November, 1931, is worth mentioning:—

> "The very difficult situation in Kashmir, in connection with which the Government of India have, at the request of Kashmir Darbar, sent British troops to the State and an Ordinance has been promulgated by the Governor-General conferring additional powers on the Punjab Government, is made up of two distinct but related elements. The first element, which from the point of view of the administration, is also the more immediately important, is, of course, the ingress of Muslim jathas into the State territory from British India. It was this which made the situation, which has always been fraught with potential danger, one of actual danger."

No better proof of Muslim India's all-out support can be had than to quote the same paper. It wrote on 14th August, 1931,

> "Until the mobilisation of the British Muslims outside the Kashmir border, Kashmir never had any Hindu Muslim problem at all. The present agitation which culminated in the unfortunate necessity for opening fire on an unruly mob, is but the inevitable corollary of feelings and sentiments roused by organised agitation by the All India Kashmir Conference and the whirlwind campaign of falsehood and half-truths indulged in by the rabid section of the Muslim Press. The State had to proscribe some of the papers recently with the result that the same seditious sheets appear in another garb."

Writing editorially on 2nd August, 1931, under the self-explanatory caption "Muslim agitation against Kashmir", the Tribune said:

> "The formation of an All India Kashmir Committee with such men as Sir Mohammad Iqbal and Sir Zulfikar Ali Khan at its head to carry on an agitation against the Kashmir State shows the length of dishonouring absurdity to which Muslim communalism is prepared to go. We are told that the Committee has no other object in view except to secure

elementary rights for the inhabitants of Kashmir and particularly for the Mohammedans......And is Kashmir the only State where the inhabitants are without elementary rights of citizenship, as that term is now understood? The plain fact is that whole of the present artificial agitation, at the head of which the Committee has placed itself, is a deliberate and almost undisguised attempt to establish Muslim Raj in Kashmir. Such an agitation must be condemned by all true nationalists in India......*As regards the alleged grievances of the Mussalmans of Kashmir against the State, it is a matter of common knowledge that no section of the people of that State are treated with greater consideration or have less in the way of grievances than the Muslim subjects of His Highness!* We have not the smallest doubt that the Viceroy will take a proper measure of this spurious agitation and will treat it as it deserves to be treated."

Only a Congress newspaper could go to such depths of daring falsehood.

On 14th November, 1931, a deputation of sixteen leading Hindu-Sikh members of the Central Assembly, led by Sir Hari Singh Gour, waited upon the Viceroy in connection with the Kashmir situation. They included post-independence India's Finance Minister, Mr. Shanmukhum Chetty and Mahasabha President, Bhai Parmanand. According to the Tribune, dated 17th November, the deputationists "expressed their anxiety that no attempt should be made to coerce the Maharaja through British Indian Muslim influences......they emphasised the strategic importance to India of the Kashmir frontier and the danger of surrendering it to the Pan-Islamic school of thought".

Hindu India did not confine its condemnation of the Movement to public statements or newspaper editorials only. They went much farther. According to the same paper, the following resolution was passed in a meeting of the Rajputs of Ambala district held on 27th July, 1931:

"The meeting condemns strongly the incessant propaganda of the Muslim Press of the Punjab against the Hindu ruler of Kashmir and characterises it as most mischievous, malicious, and selfish......This meeting assures His Highness that the services of the Rajputs of Ambala District are ever at His Highness' command in the maintenance of law and order. This meeting heartily sympathises with all those Hindus who have been looted, murdered or injured by Muslim goondas and hooligans."

The "chivalrous" Rajputs had not even a word of sympathy for the absolutely unarmed Muslims—more than a hundred—who were bulleted by the "brave" Dogra soldiers and left to die in pools of blood.

According to the same paper, about six thousand Hindus, including a batch of "Hindu Defence Force volunteers", paraded Lahore streets on 20th December, 1931, "in order to make a demonstration of sympathy with the Maharaja of Kashmir and his Government......The processionists raised shouts of 'Dogra Raj Zindabad', 'Hari Singh Zindabad' and 'Hindu Dharam Ki Jai". The para-military organisation was brought into being first by the Hindus of Lahore. They were given training in the use of fire-arms at secret hide-outs in predominantly Hindu localities. The initial idea, it seems, was to despatch them to the State to augment the State forces so as to maintain the Hindu dynasty in power. The organisaton soon spread to other parts of Punjab and ultimately became the nucleus of the provincial branch of the since notorious Rashtriya Sevak Sangh.

Hindu press went even as far as to misrepresent the very objectives of the Movement as if there was absolutely nothing wrong with the Dogra Government and as if the Muslim inhabitants were extremely happy with their lot. Subtly seeking to shield the Dogra tyrant, the Tribune wrote editorially on 8th August:

> "At the bottom of this essentially engineered agitation there are two sinister ideas, each as unpatriotic and anti-national as the other. One is to divert attention from the burning issue of India's constitutional deliverance......the other is to further the professed aim of the Iqbal school to have a chain of provinces and States under Muslim Raj in the northwest of India....As regards the Kashmir agitation itself, we have not a moment's doubt that the better mind of the Muslim community will condemn it as strongly and whole-heartedly as it is condemned by the better mind of other communities."

The incident that took place on the Eid day at Jammu was thus twisted by the Lahore Congress daily "Pratap" in its issue of 13th May, 1931:

> "The Sub-Inspector had just enquired from a respectable man as to whether it was a lecture or some preaching with regard to Eid; the Muslims got infuriated just on this enquiry and hurled abuses on the Sub-Inspector, who went away silently."

Writing in its issue dated 3rd July, 1931, the newspaper carried the following mischievous report:

"It has been reliably learnt that the Government is contemplating action against the communalist Muslims of Jammu. The local officials have sent a report to the Maharaja Sahib that if action was not taken against these Muslim miscreants, the result would be serious. It is also said that the Kashmir Government is contemplating action against the mischievous (Muslim) newspapers from Punjab. The documents are being prepared."

Given below are a few more extracts available here:

"The Muslims of Jammu and Kashmir enjoy more privileges than the Hindus of the State. Under these circumstances, their feverish preparations for a revolt, are the result of a conspiracy......The need of the hour is to annihilate the conspiracy. The ugly forces that are making their appearance in the State ought to be uprooted and destroyed."[1]

"Muslims undoubtedly enjoy more rights and better privileges than the Hindus of the State."[2]

"The Muslims of Kashmir want to depose the Maharaja and capture its Government. They will return to peace only on the day the Maharaja abdicates."[3]

"The agitation that has been let loose in Kashmir is not meant for redress of any grievances but to overthrow the Government."[4]

"If Hindu India really wants to save the State from falling into the hands of Muslims, they will have to give up their complacency and start active struggle, otherwise it will be too late to shed tears of sympathy for the Hindus of the State. It is time to wake up, to get ready and save the Hindu kingdom which is now lying at the mercy of unclean and brute hordes."[5]

"Kashmiri Pandits, Dogras and other sections of Hindus should in this emergency get together and adopt a common programme in consultation with Hindus from outside (the State) to safeguard not only themselves but also their (Hindu) State".[6]

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1 Daily Milap, Lahore qouted by Inquilab, 17-7-1931.
2 *Ibid*— 26-9-1931.
3 Daily Pratap, 28-9-1931.
4 *Ibid*—, 1-10-1931.
5 *Ibid*—, 4-11-1931.
6 *Ibid*—, 5-11-1931.

"The grievances being published by Muslim Press and the loud cries raised by them about the conditions in Kashmir State are known to all truth-loving people to be utterly unfounded."[1]

"Kashmiri Muslims should think as to how they have fallen a prey into the hands of thugs (meaning their leaders) and how they are being used as tools in a conspiracy against their ruler. The conditions that exist at the present time should suffice to open their eyes. As an act of repentence the least that they should do is to declare that they do not want redress of their grievances and that they would live under the same conditions as exist at the moment."[2]

Among the distorted captions given to news from Kashmir published in these newspapers, may be cited onlyt he following which were banner-head-lined:

"Massacre of Hindus in Kashmir"; "The revolt of Muslim slaves", meaning Muslim inhabitants; "Invasion of the Hindu State by Muslims"; "Loot and arson in Kashmir", etc. etc.

The following editorial from daily Inquilab published in the paper's issue dated 30th September, 1931 will, to some extent, show the anti-Muslim attitude adopted by Congress and its Press:—

"People who proclaim that they consider intervention in the affairs of Indian States as being against the policy of the Congress may kindly explain as to whether it is the policy of the Congress that it should close its eyes from the States where Muslims are subjected to oppression and tyranny but on the other hand if even a single Hindu (in a Muslim State) has any complaint, then to send telegrams after telegrams while on its part the Hindu press makes great fuss of the incident. Do not the Congressite Muslims consider us even human beings? The Hindu press while remaining loyal to its Congress creed, can add insult to our injuries but these Congressite Muslims consider it necessary (for their association with the party) to support the tyrant and the oppressor. Is it the Congress creed that tyrants should be supported? Has Gandhijee gone to England (to attend the R.T.C.) for these ends? It is therefore clear that if India gets freedom, Muslims will be treated like street dogs."

The Daily Pratap wrote on the 23rd of October, 1931:

"As you sow, so shall you reap is a proverb which fully applies to the Maharaja Sahib of Kashmir. The greatest achievement of his reign so

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1 Hindu, Madras, 24-10-1931.
2 Daily Milap 14-9-1931.

far is that he created a movement that Jammu was for the Dogras and Kashmir for Kashmiris. The State employees from Punjab have been subjected to several harsh restrictions. The Kashmiri Pandits also supported the slogan that Kashmir was for Kashmiris and treated Punjabi Hindus as strangers but now the Muslims of Kashmir are planning to turn out the same Kashmiri Hindus from the State or let them live as their slaves."

Daily Milap wrote the following editorial note on the 26th of September, 1931:—

"When I read Muslim newspapers which claim that Kashmiri Muslims were loyal to the Maharaja and did not desire to dethrone him or capture the Government but are only fighting for their rights and are for that reason staging peaceful demonstrations, they are treating the whole world as fools or are just making a demonstration of their own insanity. But now that the Maharaja has acknowledged their loyalty and is considering their demands, it has been proved that those people who had been criticising the Muslim newspapers (meaning the newspaper itself and other Hindu newspapers) were in the wrong and had been uttering non-sense."

The same newspaper wrote on the 25th of November, 1931, in an editorial:—

"The Jammu and Kashmir State has frequently given concessions to Muslims and despite rebellion, disturbances and sabotage, they have been frequently pardoned, but they still persist in their mischievous activities; Hindus are being looted as usual and slogans are being raised against the Maharaja but even then Maharaja Hari Singh continues to forgive his Muslim subjects and by releasing rebels, assassins, decoits and mischief-mongers, has been foolishly deluding himself that he can thus win over those who can only be won over by strong means. The internal revolt could easily be suppressed by the State with its own resources but in order to meet the outside threat, the Maharaja had to seek assistance from the British and that is how and why the British army has entered the State. It is, therefore, clear that the responsibility for meeting the heavy expenses of the British army falls on the shoulders of Kashmiri Muslims because it is they who, by creating disturbances, made it necessary to invite these troops.

The mischief spread by outside Muslims in connection with Kashmir contained many a slogans such as the poverty of Kashmiri

Muslims; that they were dying of starvation and that they were groaning under heavy taxation and the way out to save them from this poverty and starvation discovered by the Ahraris, has been such that the State will undergo a further burden of lakhs of rupees and after all it must come again from the pockets of the State people."

The Milap then called upon the Muslims of the State to ask the Ahraris and the Ahmedis to meet the increased expenditure of the State. The paper also wrote:—

"We want to tell the British Government that it is only by continuing and strengthening the Hindu State (meaning the Jammu and Kashmir State) between the Indian Empire and the foreign frontiers that the internal security of the Indian Empire, can be guaranteed."

"One of the Muslim demands is that if a Hindu were to embrace Islam, he should not be deprived of his ancestral property. This demand is wholly against the Hindu Law of Inheritance which lays down that only such a person is entitled to ancestral property who follows his religion. To seek a change of this law amounts to creating permanent disturbance in the State and to wipe out the Hindus. The Muslims from outside the State are welcome to move the Heavens and the Earth but they should remember that these laws shall never be changed."

In another issue of the paper, the editorial said:

"If at this stage any English or semi-official news agencies are given any hint to support the Muslims or if the British Government were to allow the State administration to be weakened in any manner, it should remember that it will have to pay very dearly for the same. This will also determine as to whether the Government intends to allow the Pan-Islamic concept of Sir Mohammad Iqbal to take roots or take appropriate steps to save the world and its peace from this grave danger (of Pan-Islamism). It is the duty of the British Government that at this critical stage they should take care of the future of the world and should not for that reason allow Kashmir to become a prey to Pan-Islamic concept."

The daily Pratap commented editorially on 22nd November, 1931:

"My son can resort to Satyagrah in his own home but can my neighbour have recourse to it in my house and if he does so, I will not call it

Satyagrah but shall treat it as an attack upon my house and shall face him with all my moral, legal and physical strength."

Soon after the observance of the Kashmir Day by Muslims, the Punjabi Hindus and Sikhs also observed a Kashmir Day. They observed a complete hartal, took out processions and held public meetings expressing their solidarity with the Hindu Maharaja. On 1st September, 1931, a delegation from Punjab met the Maharaja in Jammu and demanded strong action against the Muslims. It was followed by a Hindu boycott of fruit, shawls and other articles exported from Kashmir valley. Another deputation was sent to Jammu on 8th November; it met the Prime Minister and other Hindu leaders and on its return, issued a mischievous statement claiming that Muslims only wanted restoration of their mosques and permission to convert Hindus. On 16th October, Rai Bahadur Bakhshi Sohan Lal, Bar-at-Law, and A. Satyarthi, President and Secretary respectively of the Arya Surajia Sabha Punjab, led a deputation to Jammu and met the Maharaja and other Hindu leaders and assured them of their support. Bhai Parmanand of the Hindu Mahasabha disclosed in his newspaper "Devta Saroop" that Maharaja Pratap Singh had told Hari Singh on death-bed, that as a principle of fundamental policy, he shouldn't try to improve the condition of Muslims. On an appeal issued by President of the Arya Surajia Sabha, an All India Kashmir Day was again observed on 29th November, 1931, to protest against the setting up of the Glancy Commission.

The Working Committee of the Akali Dal, in a meeting held at Amritsar on 5th August, condemned the Muslim agitation for reforms and offered the services of the Sikhs to the Maharajah. The Akali Dal also appointed a two member committee to keep an eye on the situation.[1]

The daily 'Akali', official organ of the Dal, wrote in an editorial:

"If the dispute had been between the Maharajah of Kashmir and his subjects and for the rights of all his Kashmiri subjects, we would have been on the side of the Kashmiris but here we see that the dispute in Kashmir is entirely for the strengthening of Muslim forces and it is being led by those who want to see the establishment of a Muslim State in northern India and are determined to enslave Hindus and Sikhs in the said State; we feel therefore, convinced that in this matter we must oppose the Muslims."[2]

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1 & 2 Inquilab, 8th, 12th, 30th August, 8th Sep. and 14th August 1931.

On the 27th of August, in a joint meeting of Pandits and Sikhs held at Lahore under the presidentship of Omkar Nath Mattu, a Praja Mandal with an executive of 13 members was set up to "protect Hindu-Sikh interests."[1]

Several public meetings were held in Punjab in the first week of September condemning the Muslim agitation for reforms and the support it was getting from Muslim Punjab; the Viceroy was called upon "to use his obligations under the treaty" to "assist the Maharajah."[2]

A statement was issued from Bombay by Dr. Moonje and Mr. Vijyaragacharya, prominent Hindu leaders, condemning the Muslim agitation and the support it was getting from India. The two leaders threatened to launch, in retaliation, similar movements against the Nizam of Hyderabad and the Nawab of Bhopal.[3]

Hindu press and leadership in the Punjab succeeded in persuading the British Governor to take action against the Daily Inquilab, Lahore, which was spear-heading the campaigin for reforms in Kashmir. Consequently, a fresh cash security of Rs. 3,000/- from the newspaper proprietor and a cash security of Rs. 2,000/- from the Muslim Printing Press, Lahore, where it was printed, was demanded. Hundreds of offers began pouring into the office of the newspaper to pay it but Abdul Majid Salik declined to accept them and announced that if the order was not withdrawn within ten days, he would cease its publication. A meeting of the Muslim members of the Unionist Party was thereupon held at the residence of Malik Firoze Khan Noon. It was of the view that to have singled out Inquilab for action while no action was taken against the Congress Hindu Press which had been indulging in a highly objectionable campaign against Muslims, was discriminatory. So a deputation consisting of Sir Sikandar Hayat Khan, Malik Firoze Khan Noon and Chaudhri Shahab-ud-Din, President of the Punjab Council, met the Governor with the result that before the expiry of ten days, the security demanded from the press was cancelled and that demanded from the newspaper was reduced to Rs. 500/-.

Syed Mirak Shah contributed to Muslim newspapers of Punjab articles on Kashmir under the cover name "Sur-i-Israfil"; Maulana Zahoor-ul-Hassan under the name of "Nasir Mirpuri" and Maulvi Mohammad Saeed from Karnah, under the name of "Rajulun Yasaa". Among the contributors was also Mr. Abdul Majid Qarshi who made the most valuable contribution of them all. As a consequence he lost his

1 to 3 Inquilab, 8th, 12th, 30th August, 8th Sep. and 14th August 1931.

service and later started a weekly paper, "Jamhoor". Mr. Abdul Majid Salik has written of him:

> "Qarshi was one of the prominent political workers from Jammu and actively participated in every movement side by side with Chaudhri Ghulam Abbas Khan and A. R. Saghar......He was the most prominent representative of Daily Inquilab in the State and I have no hesitation in saying that whatever he wrote in the columns of my paper on Kashmir, was the best example of honest and balanced journalism."[1]

1 Sarguzasht, p. 336.

CHAPTER INDEX

FORMATION OF THE MUSLIM CONFERENCE

CHAPTER XII

Formation of the Muslim Conference

THE INITIAL DIFFICULTIES

It was at the early stages of the mass Movement that the need for the formation of a State-wide political organisation was keenly felt but in the absence of the freedom of association, no steps could be taken to meet the need. The way was, however, cleared with the acceptance of the Glancy report and the recommendations made by him later as Chairman of the Franchise Committee. Extensive consultations were therefore held with men who had gained prominence as a result of their role in the Movement. All, except a few led by Sardar Gauhar Rehman, who wanted a separate organisation for Jammu province, welcomed the move. Sheikh Abdullah was, therefore, invited to Jammu to thrash out the issue. As a result of the discussions held with Chaudhri Ghulam Abbas Khan, Mistri Yaqub Ali, Sheikh Ghulam Qadir, A. R. Saghar and others, it was unanimously decided to float a single organisation embracing Muslims from all parts of the State.

Another difficulty was presented by the restricted movements or exile of certain leaders. For instance, Syed Mirak Shah had been exiled; the movements of Mian Ahmed Yar Khan, Advocate and Mufti Zia-ud-Din had been restricted to Muzaffarabad and Jammu city respectively. Through the intervention of the All India Kashmir Committee, whose representative Syed Zainul Abedin had several meetings with Col. Colvin and Mr. Lauther, the prohibitory orders were rescinded.

In Jammu city, some workers continued to have mental reservations about the utility of floating a single political party. Among them,

of course, was Mr. Gauhar Rehman. In a public meeting held at Talab-i-Khatikan on 15th September, 1932, they accused Sheikh Abdullah of having given a written undertaking to the Government to dissolve the Movement if the recommendations of the Commission were accepted. Nothing could be farther from truth. Looking at it even from a purely narrow angle, how could a man who had, on the strength of the very Movement, emerged from oblivion as a legendary hero, dissolve it? The proceedings of the meeting were published in newspapers dated 21st September. Chaudhri Ghulam Abbas Khan promptly issued a detailed statement in weekly Pasban which had recently started publication with Mr. Meraj Din as Editor-proprietor, repudiating the accusations and stressing the absolute need for maintaining unity.

Maulana Abdur Rahim Dard, Maulvi Ismail Ghaznavi, Syed Habib Shah, Editor Daily "Siyasat" and Mr. Zahur Ahmed were despatched to Srinagar, by the All India Kashmir Committee, to help in making the necessary arrangements. Financial assistance was also made available alongwith a car to facilitate the movement of workers.

THE FOUNDING FATHERS

After the release of political leaders on 4th June, 1932, the move gained momentum. According to Maulana Mohammad Saeed Masoodi, the decision to form a party and name it Muslim Conference was taken in the Central Jail Srinagar in course of discussions he had with Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, while both were interned together.[1] According to Mr. Taseer, the All India Kashmir Committee was largely responsible for this decision. A Committee was therefore set up to convene the conference. It drafted a constitution and decided to name the organisation as the "All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference". The inaugural session was held on the 14th, 15th and 16th of October, 1932, in the historic Pathar Masjid, Srinagar, under the presidentship of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah. It was a unique gathering, especially in the sense that all Muslims, irrespective of their religious differences or social distinction, sat shoulder to shoulder on the same platform with the common object of providing Muslims with a single political platform. Even Mir Waiz Mohammad Yusuf Shah who had lately criticised Sheikh Abdullah and kept himself aloof from the main stream of Muslim political thinking, also participated. A platform, fifteen feet high from the ground was constructed in the spacious ground of the Masjid on which sat about two hundred representatives and about a hundred press representatives and observers. The ground adjacent to the mosque, which was later utilised for the construction of Mujahid Manzil, the party head-

1 Taseer, p. 171.

quarters, was converted into a part of the pendal to accommodate the unprecedented audience. Hundreds of house-boats were hired to house the delegates. The Committee which made arrangements for the conference and drafted the constitution, also adopted a party flag which consisted of a green cloth, representing Muslim faith, with a crescent and star which was also the flag of the All India Muslim League and which now, in addition to a piece of white cloth representing minorities, is the national flag of Pakistan. The flag hoisting ceremony was performed on 14th by Waliullah Zain-ul-Abedin, a representative of the All India Kashmir Committee. According to Mr. Taseer, the session was attended by about three lakh men, women and children who turned the pendal into a place of pilgrimage.

The open session began on 15th October, in the evening. Khawaja Ghulam Ahmed Ashai read the address of welcome. Later, messages received from Muslim leaders and organisations from outside the State were read to the audience.

In his presidential address, after being unanimously elected to the office, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah said:

> "During the reign of Maharaja Pratap Singh, Hindu Ministers with Hindu revivalist thinking left nothing undone to suppress the Muslims and subjected them to such oppression that signs of an awakening began to make their appearance which is proved by the incidents at the Silk Factory and the famous memorial presented to the Viceroy; the incidents, however, failed to open the eyes of the rulers; instead, they attempted to tighten their grip so much so that it led to a ban on Khutba on the day of Eid and the extremely provocative incident of 'Tauheen-e-Quran'.......
>
> We are extremely grateful to the Muslims of India in general and those of Punjab in particular for their unparalleled sacrifices and total sympathy in course of our trials and tribulations. We are also thankful to the Muslim press of the sub-continent for having so effectively represented our case.......
>
> Our Movement is not directed against the minorities. I assure all my countrymen, be they Hindus or Sikhs, that we shall always try to redress their grievances but they must also respect our just rights."[1]

Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah then proceeded to make an exhaustive review of the Glancy report and told them which of the demands had

1 Taseer, p. 261.

still remained unfulfilled. He demanded an end to the forfeiture of property on change of religion, freedom of association and the withdrawal of restrictions still in force on the freedom of speech. He also demanded freedom of press and the repeal of Emergency Laws. He regretted that although the demand to set up a Legislative Assembly had been accepted in principle, no concrete steps had been taken so far to bring it into being. He also regretted that although Muslims formed 54% of the population in Jammu province (Poonch district was excluded from representation in the Assembly), only seven seats had been allocated to them in the proposed Assembly. He made an impassioned appeal to encourage female education, social uplift, arts and crafts and to give up wasteful expenditure on the occasions of marriages.

On the opening day, three sub-committees were appointed; one, consisting of seven members, was to prepare a resolution on Glancy recommendations regarding constitutional reforms and also to consider the draft constitution of the Party. Another committee, consisting of 21 members, was to consider points of disagreement with the Glancy report and the third one, consisting of 22 members, was to consider all other matters. These committees worked almost round the clock for three days and presented ten resolutions in the open session as also the Party constitution; all these were unanimously adopted. In one of the resolutions, a demand was made for the setting up of a neutral Commission to enquire into the grievances of the Muslims of Poonch, who were groaning under the tyranny of their local Raja as well as his overlord Hari Singh. It was also demanded that laws in force in the Jagir be replaced by corresponding laws in force in the State. Representation for the people of Poonch in the proposed Legislative Assembly was also demanded. Among other resolutions were those relating to forfeiture of property on conversion to Islam, representation in Services on the basis of population, enlistment of Muslims in the army reduction in land revenue, release of political prisoners and the repeal of emergency laws in Mirpur etc. By another resolution, the President was commanded to call a meeting of the General Council within four months to determine as to whether the Government had fully acted on the recommendations of the Glancy Commission and in case it had not done so, to draw up a programme of action to compel their implementation.

The Conference elected the following office-bearers:

Vice-President — Sheikh Abdul Hamid, Advocate.
General-Secretary — Chaudhri Ghulam Abbas Khan.
Secretary — Maulvi Abdur Rahim, Pleader.

By electing Chaudhri Ghulam Abbas Khan as General Secretary, although he could not, on account of his residence in Jammu, be handily available to the President, who was himself at Srinagar, the idea was to establish a healthy convention that both the offices were not to be held by either of the two provinces at the same time. If presidentship went to Kashmir province, the office of the Secretary had to be filled in by a man from Jammu province and vice versa.

In the beginning of November, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, accompanied by Ghulam Qadir Gandarbali, proceeded to Lahore to hold discussions with Muslim leaders. Towards the end of December, Khawaja Ghulam Ahmed Ashai also left for Lahore for the same purpose. A meeting of the Working Committee was held in Jammu on 17th December. The Committee called upon the Government to implement the resolutions adopted by the Party at Srinagar; it also issued a four-month ultimatum for acceptance of its demands.

On 20th January, 1933, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah returned to Srinagar and immediately plunged himself into feverish political activity. On 13th February, he circulated the following letter to members of the Working Committee:—

> "Glancy Commission's recommendations did not meet even the minimum demands of Muslims but it is a matter of deep regret that some of the recommendations and the orders issued for the implementation of others, have so far remained unimplemented so much so that even matters pertaining to the restoration of mosques and khanqahs, grant of proprietary rights to the tenants, the freedom of Press and platform, the setting up of a Legislative Assembly, facilities for the extension of education, withdrawal of emergency laws from Kotli, Rajouri and Mirpur, etc. have remained in a state of suspense."

A meeting of the Working Committee was, therefore, convened on 5th March to determine what action may be taken to secure their implementation.

A Committee consisting of the following was also set up to contact non-Muslim leaders, seek their co-operation and persuade them to participate in the Movement that may next be launched against the Government: Khawaja Saad-ud-Din Shawl, Chaudhri Ghulam Abbas Khan, Khawaja Ghulam Ahmed Ashai, Agha Saeed Hussain Shah Jalali, Maulvi Mohammad Abdullah, Advocate, Pir Hissam-ud-Din Gilani, Khawaja Ghulam Ahmed Butt, Mian Ahmed Yar, Maulvi Mohammad Hussain, Munshi Abdul Aziz

and Abdul Majid Qarshi. The Committee was unable to achieve any positive results because of the non-Muslims' non-co-operation.

Simultaneously with the circulation of the letter, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah started a mass campaign in the city to acquaint the public with the state of things and prepare them for civil disobedience; it unnerved the Government. The grim spectacle that it had to face in 1931, on account of its despotic inactivity, was too recent to be forgotten. Therefore, fearing another round with the masses, the Prime Minister, Col. Colvin, accompanied by his Minister for Law and Order, Mr. Wajahat Hussain, came to Srinagar and initiated negotiations with the Muslim representatives. Letters were also exchanged. The meeting of the Working Committee began on 5th March and the deliberations continued upto 8th March, as negotiations were still under way. On 8th March, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah read the following statement before the Working Committee which was released to the press:

> "At the request of the Governor of Kashmir, I had a telephonic conversation with the Prime Minister. In reply to my letter, I received a letter from him last evening expressing a desire to have further talks with me with regard to our demands. I, therefore, had a meeting with him which lasted two hours. The Prime Minister conceded that some recommendations of the Glancy Commission had not been implemented so far but that the delay was due to reasons beyond his control. The Prime Minister was also keen to hear specific complaints."

A few days later, a memorandum was submitted to the Government which also included a demand for complete freedom of association and speech. All recommendations were immediately accepted.

MIR WAIZ MOVES AWAY FROM THE MAIN-STREAM

Towards the end of 1931, the estrangement between Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah and Mir Waiz Mohammad Yusuf Shah, which has been the cause of great damage to Muslim interests, apart from having blurred the image of the two leaders themselves, had unfortunately begun to cast its ominous shadows. The sudden but growing popularity of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah was exploited by certain reactionary elements in the city, sometimes at the behest of the Government, to create a feeling of jealousy and mistrust in the mind of Mir Waiz. Whenever both appeared together in the public, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah was the centre of bigger attraction and greater ovation. It was but natural that it should have created a sense of personal bitterness in the mind

of Mir Waiz whose family, only a year ago, was the most powerful and influential in the Valley. It was, however, unfortunate that Mir Waiz could not rise to the occasion and recognise the historical processes that make and unmake the destinies of man. One courageous step, involving great personal risk at the opportune or inopportune moment, has very often in history led either to the total annihilation of the man concerned or placed fame and glory at his feet. That is what actually happened in the case of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah and the failure of Mir Waiz to recognise this important fact resulted not only in the division of the Muslims of Srinagar city into two permanently hostile camps, now in their third generation, who were at times thirsty of each others blood, instead of continuing their united movement against their common oppressor, but also resulted, as could be expected, in the further decline of the power and prestige that once belonged to the family of Mir Waiz. There is no doubt that some Pandits encouraged the rift because they felt that only a division in the Muslim ranks could delay their dethronement from power. Mir Waiz was himself an honest man of simple thinking whose heart throbbed for Muslims and their abject conditions as much as that of any other Muslim leader, but the tragedy was that he was weak of resolve and hence easily amenable to the powerful lobby of vested interests, who, for their own ends, desired a cleavage between him and Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah.

While Sheikh Abdullah was in jail for the third time, Mir Waiz had started with his moderate criticism. On 17th August, 1932, open clashes broke out between the die-hard followers of the two leaders at Amirakadal where Mir Waiz had gone to deliver a religious address. Mir Waiz was protected by the police and removed to his home unhurt. The District Magistrate issued an order under section 144 prohibiting Mir Waiz from addressing congregations anywhere outside the Jamia Masjid; Mir Waiz Hamdani was restricted to Khanqah-i-Mualla and Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah to the Pathar Masjid. This order remained in force for two months but, as earlier stated, Hindu-Muslim clashes broke out in the city towards the end of September, 1932. It brought the mutual bickering to a temporary halt and Mir Waiz participated in the October, 1932 conference, as already stated earlier.

Hari Kishan Kaul succeeded in persuading Mir Waiz Yusuf Shah to meet him at his residence. Mr. Abdul Aziz Fazili, Ghulam Ahmad Pandit and Ghulam Mohammad Pandit acted as intermediaries. He told Mir Waiz Sahib that he was greatly respected by the Government and considered in importance second only to the Maharaja; that the Govern-

ment was prepared to give sympathetic consideration to Muslim demands but that it needed a peaceful climate; that the Government was prepared to release Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah right now if he expressed a wish to that end but that it had its own responsibilities as well. Mir Waiz was carried by this argument, whereupon Kaul drafted a telegram to the Viceroy on his behalf 'informing' h'm that 'peace' prevailed in Kashmir; that Muslims were loyal to the Maharaja and that they desired to settle their dispute with their Ruler, themselves. Mir Waiz signed the telegram and as a token of appreciation, an annual honorarium of Rs. 600/- and a royal Khilaat was awarded to him and the same was at the same time, widely publicised, obviously with ulterior motives. The Khilaat consisted of two rolls of English makhmal each measuring nine yards, four rolls of China silk, a silver tray and a shawl. When the news became public, Mir Waiz was severely criticised and his action condemned as a betrayal of the Movement. He was, however, wise enough to realise the blunder he had committed and in a subsequent meeting held at Jamia Masjid, returned the awards as unacceptable.

With the departure of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah for Lahore, Mir Waiz again started a campaign against him; this time it was more virulent. It was now alleged that he had joined the Ahmedia sect which, however, was, factually, absolutely incorrect because Sheikh Abdullah has all along remained a follower of the Hanafi Sunni sect. The campaign hurt his followers which led to a serious clash on 30th January, 1933, in the Khanqah-i-Naqshband, Srinagar. Being winter, 'kangris' were freely used by the hooligans causing burns to many; two persons were taken into custody.

Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah had to leave for Lahore again, to continue his consultations with Muslim leaders. Ramazan Eid fell on 6th April, 1933 while he was still away. The Government served an order on Mir Waiz Yusuf Shah to hold his congregation at Jamia Masjid whereas Hamdani was required to confine his congregation to the Eidgah. Unfortunately both disobeyed. Mir Waiz Yusuf Shah went to the Eidgah and Mir Waiz Hamdani to the Jamia Masjid. In the clashes that the two religious leaders thus invited, hundreds of Muslims were injured. The interior of the city was practically in the hands of goondas for many hours. This was a deliberate act on the part of the Government because its plan was to create as much mutual bitterness among Muslims as possible. As the followers of Mir Waiz consisted mainly of well-to-do people, they were the worst sufferers. Some of Sheikh Abdullah's volunteers committed excesses which should put any man to shame. Both the Mir Waiz were challaned under section 107, Criminal Procedure Code, for breach of public peace. The Additional

District Magistrate demanded sureties for keeping peace in the sum of Rs. 1,000/- each. While Mir Waiz Hamdani complied with, Mir Waiz Yusuf Shah refused to execute a bond. He was, therefore, sent to Udhampur jail on 27th April, 1933. This led to demonstrations by his followers in and around Zainakadal, his stronghold. A procession was taken out in the city. Women also took out a procession under the leadership of one Jan Bibi which squatted on Zainakadal for hours.

The news about the impending arrest of Mir Waiz had leaked out before it could be effected. A large number of his followers, some of whom have all along been fanatically devoted to him, assembled on the gate of his house to prevent his arrest. This vigil continued for a few days and it was only after they had withdrawn that Mir Waiz was arrested on 27th April 1933.

On the same day when Mir Waiz was taken to Udhampur, Sheikh Abdullah was returning from Jammu and both had a chance meeting in the way. The Government released Mir Waiz on 3rd May 1933 and brought him to Srinagar. It transpired that security, as demanded, had been executed on his behalf by one of his followers without his knowledge. The Valley remained unaffected outside Srinagar because Mir Waiz had practically lost all influence over there. On 17th May, Mohammad Khalil Wani, a worker belonging to the party of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, who had been earlier injured in a clash, breathed his last. The funeral procession was attended by about fifty thousand people. On 31st May, 1933, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, Bakhshi Ghulam Mohammad, Ghulam Nabi Gilkar and Mufti Zia-ud-Din were arrested; three persons from the Mir Waiz party were also taken into custody. As the Government was conscious of the grave repercussions of Sheikh Abdullah's arrest, therefore, Notification No. 19-L was simultaneously promulgated and the city handed over to the Army. Publication of newspapers was banned, but the order was subsequently withdrawn. When the news of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah's arrest became known, all shops were closed and processions started appearing almost in all parts of the city. These were lathi-charged; firing was resorted to by the Army in Amirakadal and Maisuma resulting in the death of one and injuries to several others. A War Council was again constituted and a platform set up at Khanqah-i-Mualla. This time the number of volunteers who offered themselves for arrest was so large that not all were taken to jail. Some were sent home after being sentenced to flogging; they included educated youth. Some women were also arrested. An English woman, wife of a retired Chief Engineer, was externed because she had expressed sympathy with a procession while it passed the Nedous Hotel where she was staying.

The important aspect of the Movement is that with the arrest of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, it immediately lost its sectarian character and became a national Movement demanding not only the release of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah but also the acceptance of political demands.

A huge procession marched towards the Residency road and stopped in front of the Nedous Hotel where the processionists squatted for two days, despite unending rain. Another innovation introduced this time was that people appeared on their roof-tops at night and raised anti-Government slogans. An order making such slogan-mongering punishable was issued and hundreds of men and some women had to pay fines or court arrest for defiance or alleged defiance of the order. Most of the men arrested in this connection were sentenced to flogging. The agitation also spread to other parts especially Akhnoor, Kotli, Kulgam, Baramula, Bijbihara, Sopore, Dodah, Handwara, Bandipura and Anantnag. Hundreds of workers were arrested and sentenced as above. In village Wampura, tehsil Badgam, a procession was severely lathi-charged resulting in the death of one man and injuries to several dozen of them.

Sheikh Abdullah was removed to Reasi jail. The question of his arrest was raised in the British parliament on 9th July; Sir Samuel Hore, the Secretary of State for India was questioned with regard to his arrest, the situation in the State and the action that the Imperial Government intended to take in the matter. A meeting of the Working Committee was convened to consider the situation which was followed by an appeal, by some leaders, to stop the agitation on the assurance that the release of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah was being actively considered. With this announcement, peace returned to the Valley. Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah was brought to Batote and the Government publicly promised to release him within six weeks provided a compromise was arrived at between the two factions in Srinagar which could be a basis for a permanent peace. Maulvi Mohammad Abdullah and Khawaja Ghulam Ahmed Ashai met him in Udhampur jail. A punitive police chowki was set up at Maisuma from the 10th of Sawan; its expenditure, estimated at one thousand eight hundred and twenty eight rupees, was borne by the residents of the locality as a collective fine but exemption was made in favour of Hindus, Sikhs and followers of Mir Waiz Yusuf Shah. Sheikh Abdullah was released on 7th August. Despite rains, a big procession was taken out in the city and illuminations were organised throughout the Valley. In a public meeting held at Hazoori Bagh on 15th August and attended by about thirty thousand people, a welcome address was presented to him. Entry to the meeting was by tickets and yet it attracted such a huge gathering which also included some European

ladies. Sheikh Abdullah then undertook a tour of the important centres of Kashmir Valley, acquainting people with their rights and urging upon them to remain united and continue the Movement for their betterment.

MIR WAIZ FLOATS A PARTY

On 17th August, Mir Waiz addressed a congregation at Ziarat-i-Dastgeer Sahib situate in Serai Bala. The meeting appears to have been disrupted by followers of Mir Waiz Hamdani with the result that a serious clash took place resulting in injuries to a number of people. Hari Singh High Street had to be closed to traffic and military and police contingents rushed to the spot. Mr. Lauther, the then Inspector General of Police, whose book "My Madness in a Mad State" having been proscribed by the Government of India on the representation of the Maharaja's Government and which was not available even in the India Office Library or the British Museum, is reported to have ordered the police on duty:—

"Let them say, what they say;
Do not say, bakra chey."[1]

The clash was unfortunately followed by an intense mutual bickering in all parts of the city. Incidents of beating and looting of stray individuals were common. Bakhshi Ghulam Mohammad who had by now come to be known as Ghulam Mohammad Gandhi, perhaps because he had been working as a clerk in Khadi Bhandar and himself wore Khadi, assumed the role of a Salar. A volunteer corps was raised by him, one of whose wings, consisting mainly of lorry drivers from Maisuma, was known as "Maisuma Regiment", which frequently attacked the followers of Mir Waiz. It has to be recorded regretfully that Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah gave them full support and encouragement and was sometimes found moving with these groups with a hockey stick in his hand.[2] The tussle was so intense that many persons divorced their wives because of their divided loyalties. The common practice for both the parties was that whenever a person, belonging to the opposite faction, was found in their stronghold, someone would raise the slogan "Ya Ali" which was a signal for assault and immediately the poor man was surrounded by his opponents. Then some other person would raise the slogan of "Malmali" which meant that his turban was to be taken off. It may be noted that in those days turban was almost universally used by Muslims as their head-wear. Someone would then raise the slogan "Haidri" which was answered with the

1 Taseer, p. 288.
2 *Ibid*, p. 290.

further slogan of "chadri" which meant that he was to be relieved of the cash and articles of daily use he was carrying. The wretched soul was then subjected to a severe beating.

Under these circumstances, Mir Waiz thought it necessary for his survival to set up an organisation of his own. A meeting was held in the house of Khawaja Mohammad Abdullah Bassu, in Maharaj Ganj, which was attended by his leading supporters. Khawaja Abdullah Joo Bassu who died a few years back was considered to be one of the principal advisers of Mir Waiz. This writer has known him personally for some time and found him a man of piety, who was intensely dedicated to Mir Waiz and his family. Abdus Salam Parimu proposed that the new party be given the name of "Muslim League" but as Muslim League had not by that time assumed the importance of a great popular movement and perhaps also because Allama Iqbal with whom Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah had personal contact, was actively associated with it, it was decided, on the suggestion of Soofi Ahmad, to name it as "The Azad Muslim Conference". Mir Waiz supported the latter proposal which was adopted. Most of the loyalist Muslims such as Abdur Rahim Bande, Munshi Assadullah Vakil, Khizar Mohammad Zaru, Haji Munshi Assadullah of Sukalipura and Ghulam Mohammad Malik were among its "founding fathers". They were unpopular for their pro-Government leanings; some of them had even been used as puppets against the Muslims when the latter were going through trials and tribulations, only recently. The formation of a party with such persons as its pillars did not, therefore, augur well for it. It failed to attract popular support and remained confined to Zainakadal, the city stronghold of the Mir Waiz family. The only good that the Conference achieved was the introduction into public life of Khawaja Abdus Salam Dalal, a man of immense courage who later achieved prominence as a dedicated soldier in the cause of the Pakistan Movement.

The first session of the new party was held at Jamia Masjid. As a counter move, Mir Waiz Hamdani acting on inspiration from Sh. Abdullah, set up a society known as "Anjuman-e-Ittehad-o-Taraki". The Society convened a conference of its supporters on the same dates at Khanqah-i-Naqshband. It was attended, among others, by Mian Ahmed Yar Khan, Bakhshi Ghulam Mohammad, Maulvi Mohammad Abdullah, Advocate and Ghulam Nabi Gilkar. The main theme at the session of the Azad Muslim Conference unfortunately was loyalty to the Dogra dynasty, which surely proved enough to discredit it in popular estimation so much so that it died a natural death within a few years. The conference convened as a counter has gone down under the name of "Shoda Conference" because its main theme was criticism and abuse of Mir Waiz and his family.

Bakhshi Ghulam Mohammad and his volunteers attacked the Jamia Masjid session and hurled brick-bats to disrupt it. Thus the unity that had brought the Muslims of Kashmir so close to their national goal, had to pass through a severe test.

However, an immediate good that followed the setting up of the Azad Muslim Conference was that the Muslim Conference leadership had to pay their undivided attention to organising their own party. They feared that in the absence of a well organised party, they may not be able to fight on two fronts. Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah and his colleagues, therefore, started touring Kashmir valley. Muslim Conference branches were opened in every town and important village. Among those who thus came in the lime light and helped in organising the party were Soofi Mohammad Akbar from Sopore, Sheikh Mohammad Akbar from Baramula, Qazi Abdul Ghani from Delinah, Maulvi Mohammad Yasin from Sopore, Abdur Rahim Dar, Abdul Kabir Khan and Mukhtar Ahmad from Bandipura, Abdul Ghani from Tral, Mirza Mohammad Afzal Beg from Islamabad, Master Abdul Aziz from Muzaffarabad and Ghulam Qadir from Gandarbal. They also set up a national Baitul Mal with Bakhshi Ghulam Mohammad as its Chief Administrator.

The next session of the Muslim Conference was held at Mirpur on the 15th, 16th and 17th of December, 1933. Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah was again unanimously elected President in recognition of his unique role in the Muslim awakening. Allama Iqbal who had been invited to attend the session, was unable to do so but sent the following letter:—

"Lahore,
Dated 12th October, 1933.

Dear Sheikh Abdullah Sahib,

Aslam-o-Alaikum. I have received your invitation just now. I was very happy to read in newspapers about the Kashmir Muslim Conference. I have full faith that all the leaders of Kashmir will soon straighten their matters. I am praying to God for this and hope that He will crown you with success. I was sorry to learn that many an organisation have recently sprung up because I have no doubt that your mutual differences will greatly obstruct your march. Unity is the only way through which you can achieve your political and social ends. The Muslims of India have suffered so far only because of the absence of unity among them; its members and especially its Ulema have been playing into the hands of others and are even now playing in such

hands. Any way I pray to God that your State may not witness such an experience. I am really sorry that I cannot participate in the Conference because of pre-occupations. I hope you are well.

Yours
Mohammad Iqbal"[1]

(Original in Urdu)

The Conference passed numerous resolutions touching upon freedom of press, repeal of section 108-A, Criminal Procedure Code, which empowered the Government to banish any person either from his home or town or even the State itself arbitrarily, withdrawal of restrictions on change of religion, immediate setting up of the Legislative Assembly and Municipalities, representation of Muslims in Government services according to their population and removal of discriminatory measures against the agriculturists and the labourers. By another resolution, the Conference passed a vote of no-confidence against Mr. V. N. Mehta, the Revenue Minister and demanded his immediate removal. In another resolution, non-Muslims were again requested to participate in the Movement for restoration of democratic rights and assured that the party had nothing against them as a community.[2]

MILK-MAID BECOMES A PRINCESS

It was at this stage that Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah married his present wife Akbar Jehan Begum, who later played a prominent role in bringing about a change in the mental attitude of her husband towards the State's future affiliations. She is the daughter of a convert to Islam from Christianity, Mr. Harry Nedous, an Englishman who was then a major shareholder in the chain of Nedous Hotels at Lahore, Srinagar and Gulmarg. It is said that truth is sometimes stranger than strange. Mr. Harry was one morning sitting in a lawn of the Nedous Hotel Gulmarg, enjoying the blissful solitude of the 9000 feet high hill-resort, surrounded by silvery snow-capped mountains and a smiling sun. The solitude was suddenly but pleasantly broken by the essentially feminine music produced by the movement of bangles. As if awakened from a deeply absorbing dream, Harry's dreamy looks subconsciously searched for the origin of the voice but alas! he was no longer the haughty Gora Sahib, the owner of the fairy land that the Gulmarg Nedous then was. Mr. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, a globe-trotter himself, told this writer that he had not come across anywhere in the world, such a beautiful, picturesque and heavenly spot as

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1 & 2 Taseer, p. 297.

that of its location. He had been totally humbled by the beauty of the young, care-free but proud Kashmiri Gujar milkmaid who had, perhaps providentially, come in place of her father to deliver some milk to the Hotel. Harry ultimately proposed marriage but was snubbed by her and referred to her parents. He acted essentially as a Westerner and she equally essentially as an Easterner. He went to her parents; they had no objection provided he embraced Islam. A Westerner, to whom love transcended every other consideration, he surely had no objection and this is how the illiterate Cinderella became Mrs. Harry Nedous. He took her to England and Europe several times and it is a tribute to both that their love endured to the very last and their mutual devotion never knew a strain. Begum Abdullah was their first child. She was first married to a Muslim who passed as a Pir and had obtained prominence in the social circles of Bombay through a strange coincidence. A prominent Englishman doing business in the city had applied for a certain contract. He was not hopeful but, all the same, was extremely keen to get it. Some Muslim friends introduced him to the Pir who raised his hands in prayer and gave him a blessing. It so happened that he got the contract. This resulted in his sudden rise in the social circles of the city, which, however, he had to leave, not much later, on account of some indecency at a certain party. He came to Lahore and made Ravi road his centre of activities. Reported by his neighbours to be awesomely handsome, he appears to have been far from being pious in the accepted sense and frequently misbehaved with his wife. He resembled the legendary Lawrence of Arabia and was once even mobbed in the vicinity of Lahore when some Muslim youth mistook him for the Colonel. Differences broke out between him and his wife with the result that through the intervention of some neighbours, one of whom gave the details of the Pir quoted above in course of an article published in Agha Shorish Kashmiri's weekly Chattan in early fifties, who were employed in the Lahore Civil Secretariat, she was divorced and straightaway joined her father at Srinagar. Probably, her arrival in Srinagar coincided with the rise of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah. Harry Sahib, as he is affectionately known in the Valley, desired to bring about the marriage of his divorced daughter with Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah and this is how it came about. Begum Abdullah who is known as Madar-e-Meharban has not only received western education but also more than average religious education. Until a few years back, she used to observe purdah. It is said by women who have heard her reciting the Holy Quran in public meetings that she has a melodious voice and her recitation is greatly inspiring. A very intelligent woman and a devout Muslim, it was openly said in the official circles in New Delhi that Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah's "breach" with India was primarily brought about by Begum Abdullah and Mirza Mohammad Afzal Beg, who were referred

as "Double B" meaning Begum and Beg. Mr. Morarjee Desai is credited with having coined the term. They have three sons, Tariq, Farooq and Khalid and perhaps two daughters.

A few weeks after marriage, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah left for Lahore to clarify his position with members of the All India Kashmir Committee. By then, differences had cropped up due to the Ahrar campaign against the association of Ahmedis. Mirza Bashir-ud-Din Mahmud Ahmed, therefore, tendered his resignation. It is claimed by Ahmedis that it was reluctantly accepted because most of the members, including such non-Ahmedis as Sir Mohammad Iqbal, the Nawab of Kunjpura, Sir Zulfiqar Ali, Abdul Majid Salik, Maulana Ghulam Rasool Mehr and Syed Habib, Editor Daily Siyasat, sincerely felt that the Head of the Jamaat-e-Ahmedi had made valuable contribution to the cause of Kashmir and that his association with the Committee was in the best interests of the Kashmir Movement because of the dedicated organisation he commanded and the wide resources at his disposal.[1] It has to be recorded with regret that the Committee had to be dissolved a year or two later, and even during this period it was not able to make any effective and worth-while contribution. There is no doubt that it was primarily the mass awakening of Kashmiri Muslims themselves and their rendezvous with death and danger that compelled the Dogra Government to grant them some of their long-denied rights, but at the same time it has got to be very clearly admitted that the contribution made by the Muslims of India towards their realisation was very substantial and but for it, the repression, torture and killings would have increased manifold in this lawless State before Muslim demands could be expected to be accepted.

However, had the strife been kept out of the Committee and had it been allowed to continue to function as Muslim India's united advisory and assistance group for Kashmir—a role in which it had been confirmed by the passage of time, I have no doubt, that the politics of the State may not have been exposed to the Congress influence and the forces of Hindu domination, spear-headed and camouflaged by Congress nationalism, could have been successfully kept out.

While he was in Lahore, things moved swiftly in Srinagar. One Hakim Habibullah, an A.S.P. was demoted to Inspectorship. A few young workers hurriedly revived the Muslim Young Mens' Association and issued an ultimatum containing various demands including the restoration of the Hakim to his previous post. The

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1 Zahur Ahmad, p. 242.

ultimatum gave the Government seven days for a decision and simultaneously the formation of a War Council was announced at a public rally at the Hamdan mosque. Pir Mubarik Shah Qadri, Editor weekly 'Rehnuma', Srinagar, was put in overall charge of the Council though the arrangement was kept secret. The Government did make a reply within the stipulated time but asked for more time to consider the demands. The request was rejected.

BLOOD FLOWS AGAIN

In Muttan (district Islamabad), a Hindu-Muslim dispute arose about the possession of a plot of land. A Committee, comprising Khawaja Saad-ud-Din Shawl and Pandit Shiv Narain Fotedar, constituted for an on-the-spot investigation, submitted a report but the Government did not come to any quick decision while the local administration was backing the Hindus. Under these circumstances, the Association thought it useless to delay its action and started an agitation in Srinagar from 27th January, 1934. Among those arrested were Mir Ghulam Hussain, Bakhshi Ghulam Mohammad and Mir Waiz Hamdani. On 28th January, the Notification No. 19-L was again enforced and at the same time the following leaders were exiled : Maulana Mohammad Saeed Masudi, Sadr-ud-Din Mujahid, Mohammad Maqbool Bayhaqi, M. A. Sabir, Syed Ghulam Mohi-ud-Din Andrabi and Maulvi Ghulam Mustafa Masudi. Mir Waiz Hamdani was ordered not to allow the use of the Hamdan mosque as a platform for agitation. He disobeyed the order and appeared at one meeting wearing a shroud-like white cloth customarily used for the dead in Kashmir and delivered a biting attack on the repressive policy of the Government. He was arrested and exiled for one year. Bakhshi Ghulam Mohammad and Mir Ghulam Hassan Gilani were removed to Reasi jail, while Khawaja Ghulam Mohi-ud-Din Kara, Khawaja Ghulam Mohi-ud-Din Hamdani, Mohammad Iqbal Chhapri and Qureshi Mohammad Yusuf were summarily tried and sentenced to one year's rigorous imprisonment and a fine of rupees twelve hundred each. In a few days the entire Valley was in the grip of a political storm. In addition to flogging, the workers were now also subjected to heavy fines and being unable to pay it on account of poverty, their movable property was confiscated and auctioned. Invariably Muslims stayed away from auction sales and invariably also it were the Hindus who came forward to take undue advantage of the situation and purchased it at nominal rates.

The agitation remained confined to Kashmir valley alone. It was at this stage that the highly unsatisfactory Franchise Committee Report

was published. As the people were already deeply involved in a movement, it added insult to injury. Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah who was still in the plains, condemned it as a "disappointing document".

As already stated, the Movement had already spread to other parts of the Valley. On Friday, the 3rd of February 1934, Muslims of Pulwama in the district of Islamabad, held a meeting at Eidgah which was addressed by their local leaders, Mohammad Akbar Dar, Abdul Ghani Trali and others. Ignoring the order of the tehsildar, as Magistrate on duty, to disperse and demolish the pendal, the congregation resumed the meeting after saying Jumma prayers. The Tehsildar thereupon ordered the troops on duty to open fire which resulted in twelve deaths and more than three dozen injured. Given below are the names of the martyrs:—

1.	Ali Malik	—	30 years
2.	Habib Butt	—	35 years
3.	Ghulam Mohammad	—	28 years
4.	Sultan Tola	—	32 years
5.	Rehman Dar	—	39 years
6.	Amir Dar	—	26 years
7.	Munawar Magrey	—	30 years
8.	Sultan Malik	—	32 years
9.	Amir Sheikh	—	35 years
10.	Qasim Mir	—	30 years
11.	Qadir Sheikh	—	33 years
12.	Wahab Dar	—	24 years

Notification 19-L had by now been promulgated all over the Valley. The inhuman punishment of flogging created great resentment everywhere. In Bijbihara, some Muslims were sentenced to public flogging; they included old men and a few teenagers who bled profusely and fainted. One can imagine the state of shock and anger that it must have produced. A procession was taken out on 6th February to protest against the inhuman and medieval punishment of flogging. Complete hartal was also observed by the business community ; Muslim students absented themselves from their schools to join the procession. The procession was raising anti-Government slogans and demanding the withdrawal of the army from the town. This was intolerable for the troops on duty who fired on the procession resulting in three deaths and more than a dozen injured. The names of the martyrs are given below:

1. Subhan Dar — 23 years
2. Habib Kamrazi — 35 years
3. Habib Dar — 32 years

The Editor weekly 'Sadaaqat' who visited the town on 7th February, wrote in his paper:—

> "Bijbihara has been turned into a city of the dead. No one seems to be acquainted with anyone else. I tried my best and it was after a hundred difficulties that a boy of ten years was persuaded to take me to the houses of my acquaintances but no one was available as almost every male member had left the town and gone elsewhere for fear of the army."

An editorial in the weekly contained the following sentence: "Hartal (in Badgam) was so complete that none except a few dogs could be found on the roads". The Government interpreted the word 'dogs' as meaning its officers; the Editor was therefore arrested and detained without trial. The Editor, weekly 'Albarq', Srinagar, M.A. Sabir was arrested for publishing news about Bijbihara killings etc. and sentenced to six months rigorous imprisonment.

Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah issued several statements condemning the repression. He also met members of the Central Assembly, Editors of leading newspapers and senior officers of the Government of India and acquainted them with the grave situation in the State.

CH. GHULAM ABBAS AS DICTATOR

On 10th February, 1934, a meeting of the Working Committee was convened at Sialkot. It was convened outside the State in order to facilitate the participation of exiled members. Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah was of the view that the agitation ought to be called off because it had been started by youngsters without prior consultation with the parent body and without their authority. In his view it was highly inexpedient to allow a precedent to be set up for anyone, anywhere, to stand up without authority and proper planning and involve the parent body in an agitation. He, therefore, proposed that simultaneously with the withdrawal of the agitation, the Government offer for negotiations be accepted, but on account of the killings at Pulwama and Bijbihara and the mass incidents of flogging, lathi-charges, fines and other repressive measures, the Working Committee instead chose to dissolve itself and empowered its General Secretary, Chaudhri Ghulam Abbas Khan, to initiate negotia-

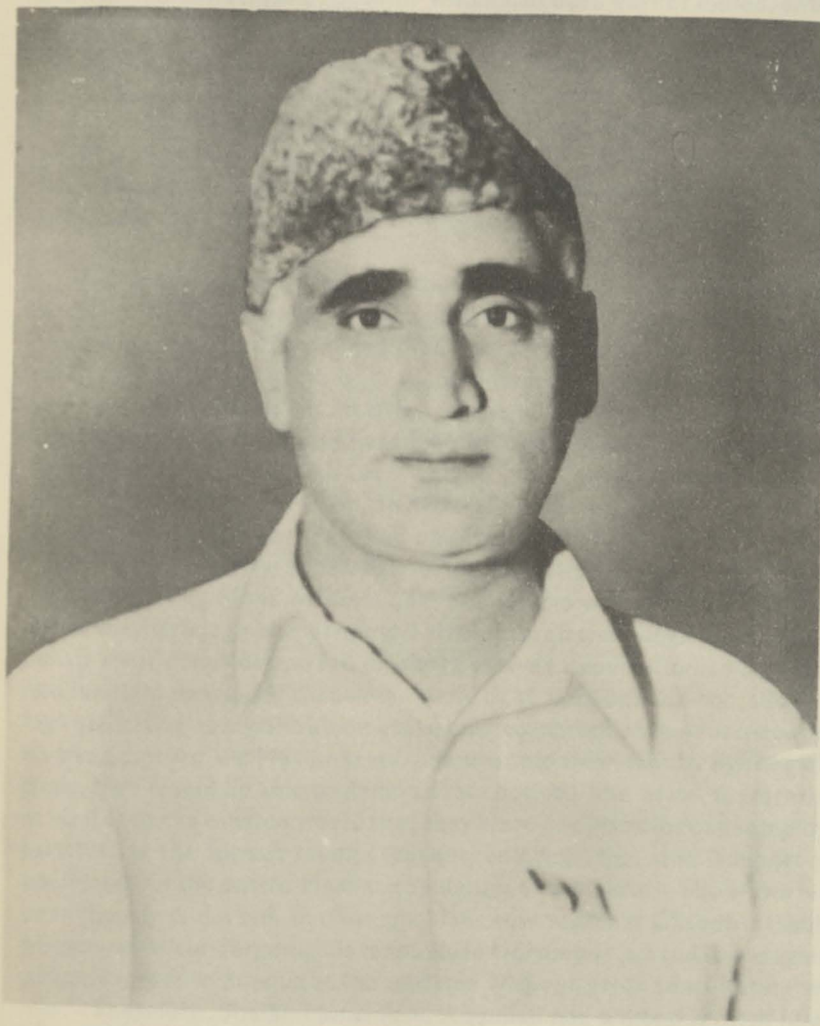
tions with the Government for the acceptance of its demands within fifteen days, failing which, he was to provide a programme of action. As the Constitution was suspended, he was named Dictator. The Durbar had already shifted to Jammu which was the Dogra's winter capital.

Chaudhri Ghulam Abbas sent a copy of the resolution to the Prime Minister and appended to it two memoranda: one dealt with the non-implementation of the Glancy Commission recommendations and the other detailed the MC point of view with regard to the proposed Legislative Assembly and the Franchise report. Prime Minister Colvin invited Chaudhri Sahib for talks on the question of Glancy recommendations' implementation but did not say anything as to whether he was or was not also prepared to discuss the Constitutional reforms issue. Chaudhri Ghulam Abbas wrote him back that unless the Government was willing to enter into negotiations on this issue also, he saw no useful purpose in a meeting. As the Prime Minister was not ready or, perhaps, in a position to commit himself in writing, the Dictator released the correspondence to the press and ordered the launching of a Civil Disobedience Movement.

In Srinagar, Khanqah-i-Mualla again became the centre of agitation. Chaudhri Ghulam Abbas Khan was arrested after addressing a meeting here and sentenced to six months imprisonment on the charge of spreading disaffection against the Government. A Srinagar volunteer Abdul Ghaffar followed him to the stage; as he could not make a speech, he only said that he seconded the speech made by Chaudhri Ghulam Abbas. He then recited the following verse of Iqbal:

سلطانئی جمهور کا آتا ہے زمانہ
جو نقش کہن تم کو نظر آئے مٹا دو

He was arrested at the same time and sentenced to six months rigorous imprisonment for having seconded the speech of Chaudhri Ghulam Abbas and to a further imprisonment of 1½ year with a fine of Rs. 500/- for having recited the above verse. The agitation remained confined to the cities of Srinagar and Jammu where scores of workers offered themselves for arrest. Those arrested in the Valley included Haji Abdul Aziz Bande from Srinagar, Haji Abdul Ghaffar from Handwara, Mir Ghulam Hussain from Khanyar and Mr. Young Abdullah from Sopore. Among those arrested in Jammu was Mr. A. R. Saghar who was sentenced to four months rigorous imprisonment. It seems the Movement could not gain momentum for various reasons, one of them being that a large section of workers was of the opinion that in view of the impending elections, the Civil Disobedience



CHAUDHRI GHULAM ABBAS

Movement was inopportune. They feared that if every one went to jail, the Party would not be in a position to fight elections and the field would thus be left uncontested to pro-Government and other undesirable elements. When news of these differences reached Lahore, Maulana Masudi and Sadr-ud-Din Mujahid, both of whom had been earlier exiled, entered the State incognito via Domel. Both donned typical dress of bakarwals and crossed the Domel Check post with piles of grass on their heads. On reaching Srinagar, Masudi went to the house of Mohammad Shaban in Fateh Kadal after dusk and the same night was held a meeting of the prominent workers who were still out of jail. These discussions lasted for a few days when it was decided that both should court arrest in order to discuss the situation with their imprisoned colleagues.

In the third week of April, the Government published Regulation No. I of 1991 Bikrami which defined the powers of the State Assembly. Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah was still in the Punjab continuing parleys with Muslim leaders. Strenuous hard work since early 1931 had adversely affected his health. Three jail terms, one exceeding five months and the torture and hard labour to which he had been subjected had considerably reduced his weight and brought about many an ailment. According to Taseer, he had been required, while in jail, to spun 3/8 seer of wool per day. He was undergoing medical treatment. Immediately after his arrival in Srinagar towards the end of April, 1934, he convened a meeting of the workers and leaders who were still free. He told them that although the proposed structure of the Legislature did not satisfy their demands and fell far short of their expectations, yet, wisdom and far-sight demanded that they should fight elections and not allow unrepresentative or loyalist elements to take advantage of their non-cooperation and capture the Muslim seats. He also told them that by fighting elections, they would be able to demonstrate both to the State Government as well as to the outside world that they were not just a lot of unemployed agitators as the former trumpeted but enjoyed the solid support and confidence of the entire Muslim population of the State. His views were unanimously endorsed, but the problem now was that Chaudhri Ghulam Abbas was still undergoing his sentence in Udhampur jail and it was against political ethics to announce the decision without prior consultation with him. Therefore, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah had a meeting with him in the jail but without any positive results. Chaudhri Ghulam Abbas was irreconcilably opposed to participation in the elections perhaps because he considered it inconsistent with the stand taken by him after the Sialkot meeting. The organisation decided to bypass his opposition and proceed to fight the elections. It, however, appears that some prominent leaders from Jammu and almost all of them from the Valley, except Maulana Masudi, took no part in the agitation and were not arrested.

Normally the Government arrests all leaders simultaneously whenever a movement is launched or is about to be launched. This is done to deprive people of an organised lead but this time the Government did not adopt this course perhaps because it was aware that in view of the impending elections, most of the political leaders and workers were not in favour of an agitation. Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, who was in Lahore at the time of the arrest of Chaudhri Ghulam Abbas, therefore, decided to call off the Civil Disobedience Movement. A meeting of the General Council held on 27th of August, 1934, unanimously endorsed his decision.

THE FIRST LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

In continuation with the recommendation of Mr. Glancy, the Government had appointed, on 31st May, 1932, a Franchise Committee under the chairmanship of Chief Justice Sir Barjour Dalal, with the following members:—

1. Mr. L. W. Jardine, Vice Chairman.
2. Rao Bahadur Sardar Thakar Kartar Singh.
3. Khan Bahadur Sheikh Abdul Qaiyum.
4. Mr. Ram Nath Sharma, Registrar, High Court, Secretary.

On 24th March, 1933, Sir Elliot was appointed in place of Mr. Jardine and Mr. Heera Nand Raina took over as Secretary in place of Mr. Sharma. The Committee which was even apparently unrepresentative as no non-official was appointed to it, recommended the setting up of a Legislative Assembly consisting of seventy five members. The distribution of seats was as follows:—

1. Elected Muslims	=	21
2. Elected Hindus	=	10
3. Elected Sikhs	=	2
4. Nominated members	=	42

It also provided that the number of Muslims, including, of course, the nominated members, shall not be less than 32 and that of Hindus shall not exceed 25 but at the same time 12 out of the non-official members could be appointed from any community which was a device to further cripple its representative character and enable the Maharaja to give undue representation to Hindus.

The right of franchise was extremely limited. So far as women were concerned, the right of vote was limited to those who had passed

the Middle standard or an equivalent examination. On the male side, the following were given the right of vote:—

1. Zaildars, lambardars and safaidposh;

2. Imams of Mosques or Muftis, Prohats of temples, Granthis of a Gurdawara and Priests of Churches who were working as such at least six months before the preparation of the electoral rolls;

3. A title holder;

4. A retired pensioner; provided the pension was not less than rupees ten a month;

5. Doctors, Hakims, Vaids, Lawyers and Teachers;

6. A person who had passed at least the Middle standard examination or an equivalent examination in Urdu, Persian, Sanskrit or Hindi;

7. A person who paid, as annual land revenue, at least rupees twenty;

8. Illaqadars, Jagirdars or such muafi holders to whom had been assigned a revenue of not less than rupees twenty per annum ;

9. An occupancy tenant who paid, at least, rupees twenty as annual rent;

10. A person who owned immovable property of the value of at least rupees six hundred;

11. A person who paid at least rupees twenty as annual grazing-tax provided he was not a Bakarwal.

Another rule enacted with the malafide intention of preventing popular political leaders from entering the Legislature, was that any person who had been tried by a criminal court and sentenced for an offence carrying an imprisonment of more than six months was disqualified from contesting the elections for a period of five years beginning from the day the sentence came to an end. It had, however, been provided that he could do so if the Government granted an amnesty.

It appears that the Government had conveyed to Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, unofficially, that in case Muslim Conference decided to contest

the polls, political prisoners were to be freed through a general amnesty. But unfortunately, at the eleventh hour, it went back on its promise and declined to release them. The Muslim Conference could not, at that late stage, beat a retreat and in any case it would have been impolitic and highly inexpedient because it would have enabled the Government to bring into the Legislature loyalist elements whom it could conveniently parade as elected representatives of the people. It seems that the Government, after careful consideration, decided to provoke the Muslim Conference to a boycott of the elections and that is why at the eleventh hour, it declined to release political prisoners. The plan seems to have been to create a sudden deadlock and by administering a shock to expectant public opinion, drive them to a hasty boycott.

Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah and his colleagues, however, decided to continue with the polls and telegraphically informed their workers in the muffasils to put up any available candidate in their constituency against pro-Government elements. In Srinagar, Muslims had five seats and consequently five candidates were brought into the field, namely, Maulvi Mohammad Abdullah, Advocate, Khawaja Ali Mohammad, Haji Ahmedullah Shahdad, Syed Hussain Shah Jalali and Khawaja Ghulam Mohammad Sadiq. Among the candidates nominated by the Azad Muslim Conference against three seats were, Khawaja Abdul Ahad Farooqi against Maulvi Mohammad Abdullah, Khawaja Saad-ud-Din Shawl against Khawaja Ghulam Mohammad Sadiq and Khawaja Muzaffar Shah against Syed Hussain Shah Jalali. It may be noted here that Khawaja Saad-ud-Din Shawl had, since about two years, separated from the main stream of Muslim politics and associated himself with the Mir Waiz group. Exact reasons for his breach with the Muslim Conference are not known but it seems from circumstantial evidence that gradual independent working of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah was not to his liking. It also seems that he was psychologically more inclined towards Mir Waiz which may have also resulted in a cooling off between him and Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah. The following members were elected unopposed:—

1. Khawaja Sanaullah Shah, Handwara;
2. Khawaja Ghulam Hassan Malik, Kulgam;
3. Mirza Mohammad Afzal Beg, Islamabad;
4. Khawaja Mohammad Akbar Dar, Islamabad;
5. Khawaja Ghulam Mohi-ud-Din Khan, Badgam;
6. Khawaja Mohammad Shafi Shah, Baramula;
7. Mian Ahmed Yar Khan, Muzaffarabad;
8. Sardar Fateh Mohammad Khan, Poonch;
9. Sardar Khan Mohammad, Poonch;
10. Chaudhri Abdul Karim, Mirpur;

11. Raja Murawat Khan, Bhimber;
12. Chaudhri Abdullah Khan Bhalli, Jammu;
13. Sheikh Mohammad Amin, Jammu city;
14. Col. Abdur Rehman Khan; Udhampur;
15. Major Atta Mohammad, Reasi;
16. Mian Qurban Ahmed, Kathua.

All non-Muslims, were returned unopposed. They were:

1. Pandit Amarnath Kak, Srinagar;
2. Pandit Jia Lal Killam, Srinagar;
3. Lala Amarnath Kohli, Jammu;
4. Pandit Dev Nath Shastri, Jammu;
5. Bakhshi Moti Ram, Jammu;
6. Chaudhri Chatar Singh, Jammu;
7. Pandit Ram Chand Dubai, Jammu;
8. Kotwal Lachhan Ram, Jammu;
9. Wazir Ganga Ram, Reasi;
10. Pandit Gobind Ram Bala, Kashmiri Hindu;
11. Sardar Budh Singh, Sikh from Mirpur;
12. Sardar Kanaya Singh, Sikh from Kashmir province.

Elections as such were fought only in Srinagar city, which witnessed a hectic campaign. Minor clashes occurred in certain localities but better sense largely prevailed. Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah addressed dozens of meetings. So did Mir Waiz Yusuf Shah. The contest was no longer between candidates on the basis of their comparative personal merit but between the Muslim Conference and the Azad Muslim Conference. The polling took place on 3rd September, 1934. The Muslim Conference captured all the five seats. The result gave a shattering blow to the prestige of Mir Waiz Yusuf Shah. It showed unmistakably how a man totally unknown four years back had, by sheer dint of sacrifice and selfless dedication to the Cause of his people, shattered the influence of a family which was undisputed and supreme for over a century. At the same time, it created greater bitterness especially in the camp of Mir Waiz who was from now on confirmed in the pursuit of a separatist policy.

Among the non-official members nominated by the Maharaja were the following:—

1. Major General Thakar Janak Singh;
2. Khan Bahadur Thakar Saeed Hussain, Srinagar;
3. Pandit Ram Chand Razdan;

4. Wazir Tej Ram;
5. Mirza Ghulam Mustafa, Srinagar;
6. Pandit Sham Sunder Lal Dhar;
7. Thakar Prem Singh;
8. Thakar Sadhu Singh;
9. Sardar Mal Singh;
10. Chaudhri Abbas Ali, Mirpur;
11. Mohammad Abdullah, Zaildar;
12. Sheikh Abdul Hamid, Advocate, Jammu;
13. Munshi Assadullah;
14. Pandit Lok Ram Sharma;
15. Raja of Khaplu;
16. Mehdi Ali Khan of Kharmang;
17. Wazir Mohammad Khan of Astore;
18. Khawaja Safdar Ali, Zaildar;
19. Rahim Shah Bande, Srinagar;
20. Sultan of Dopatta;
21. Bagat Ram;
22. Lala Sharbu Nath Nanda;
23. Sardar Hari Singh;
24. Lala Ram Lal, Poonch;
25. Babu Ram Das Chinhani;
26. Lajpat Rai;
27. Raja of Zangol.

It will have been noted that Muslim elected members constituted only 28 percent. The Assembly was almost powerless. The Maharaja retained all Legislative powers as inherent in his person; he also had the authority to veto the laws and resolutions passed by the Assembly; there could be no discussion either with regard to the army or the privy purse. The Maharaja could nominate any one at any time as a member of the Assembly for any particular purpose. The Assembly members were given a daily allowance of rupees five when it was in session.

The first session of the Assembly was held on 17th October, 1934, at Shergarhi in Srinagar. The Maharaja attended the inaugural session and the Prime Minister read a proclamation known as Regulation No. I of 1991 Bikrami which had already been published in April and which defined the powers of the Assembly. The members had no experience of legislative decorum. It led to many interesting speeches. For instance, Haji Ahmedullah Shahdad, a grey-bearded, turbaned business-man from Srinagar, told the Assembly:

یہ سب رنگ لایا میاں شیر کشمیر

The Muslim Conference had been able to capture fourteen seats. At a meeting of the Working Committee, which was also attended by the newly elected members, Mian Ahmed Yar was elected Leader of the Assembly Party and Mirza Mohammad Afzal Beg, Deputy Leader. It should be said to the credit of Kashmiri-speaking members that although forming majority in the Party, they elected a Punjabi-speaking colleague as their leader. It was in keeping with the Muslim awakening which aimed at breaking linguistic and regional barriers. While addressing the Assembly, Mian Ahmed Yar expressed his Party's dissatisfaction over the franchise report as well as the limited powers of the Legislature. He said that the people of the State deserved better treatment. On the other hand, the non-Muslim members, except Sardar Budh Singh and Jagat Ram, a Harijan member, who boycotted the inaugural session, showered lavish praise on what they termed as the "magnanimity" of Maharaja Hari Singh in setting up the Assembly. The session lasted till the 2nd of November.

The third annual session of the Muslim Conference was held at Sopore on 11th, 12th and 13th November, 1934. Mian Ahmed Yar Khan who had been already elected Leader of the Parliamentary group, was elected President for the ensuing year. The Conference was a great success and was attended by thousands of workers. It adopted many resolutions demanding a wider franchise, larger powers for the Assembly, implementation of Glancy recommendations, opening of industries and improvement in the health and education sectors.

ABDULLAH UNDER NEHRU-SPELL

After the session, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah left for India to renew contacts with leaders of political thought over there. It was during this sojourn that he had a meeting with Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru which had far-reaching consequences in Kashmir politics. His fore-fathers had migrated from the State. His wife Kamla was also of Kashmiri descent. As a shrewd Hindu politician, he could not look with favour upon the growth of such a strong exclusively Muslim Movement, especially in such a strategically important part of the sub-continent. To Nehru, the sub-continent was like a ring in which Kashmir valley occupied the position of a gem. This unfortunately was the time when Muslim League was extremely weak; it was plagued by factionalism; the Ulema had, on the whole, thrown in their lot with the Congress which had, under the leadership of Mr. M.K. Gandhi, emerged as the most powerful political party in the country. The London Round Table Conference had failed to evolve a constitutional formula acceptable to all, but it was apparent that some sort of internal autonomy was at

hand. In the internal tussle for power and ascendency in the Congress, Pandit Nehru had already emerged successful as the protege of Mr. Gandhi and there was no doubt in the mind of any intelligent observer of the political scene that any constitutional reforms or the grant of Dominion status meant his political power. These were the circumstances and this was the political climate when Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah left for the plains.

The reader may usefully recall here the creditable role played by Pandit Prem Nath Bazaz in the Glancy Commission and even afterwards. A very shrewd Brahmin, he was able to think much ahead of his generation when he identified himself unreservedly and generously with the Muslim aspirations. This naturally endeared him to the Muslim rank and file. He was thus able to build himself into a position of confidence with Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, Maulana Mohammad Saeed, Bakhshi Ghulam Mohammad and many others. He was gradually able to impress upon them that the real tussle was not between the Hindu masses and the Muslim masses but between the rich as against the poor and between the ruled and the ruler, irrespective of being Muslims or Hindus. The argument that, after all, the benefits secured as a result of the Muslim struggle such as the setting up of the Legislative Assembly, freedom of press, platform and association and benefits by way of the grant of proprietary rights and abolition of grazing tax etc., were made available not only to Muslims who suffered for their securance but also to non-Muslims who made no contribution at all towards that end, seems to have impressed them. It is also possible that Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, having achieved infinite heights of popularity in Kashmir, might have been also tempted by the wider field of activity and influence that association with Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru could offer in the sub-continent. All this was unfortunate but it seems this is how it happened. It has been already noted how soon after 1931 appeals for co-operation were issued to non-Muslims and how even committees had been set up to enlist their support. There appears little doubt that all this was due, primarily, to the influence that Pandit Prem Nath Bazaz exercised in the ranks of the Muslim leadership as well as the dismal picture that Muslim politics in the subcontinent presented at the time.

Let the background story be told by Pandit Prem Nath Bazaz himself:—

> "With the publication of the report of the Grievances Enquiry Commission as well as of other reports by B. J. Glancy which he submitted to the Maharaja in May, 1932, regarding the constitutional reforms and freedom of press and platform, it became widely known that all

State Hindus did not oppose the Muslim demands and that at least a section of the Kashmiri Pandits whom Prem Nath Bazaz represented were anxious to see that the legitimate grievances of the State Muslims are redressed and a progressive form of Government established in the State. This created a moderating and sobering influence on the Muslim mind. A few young Muslim leaders including Abdullah began to think of re-orientating the Muslim politics on broader, healthier and non-communal lines. Abdullah and Prem Nath Bazaz met only two months later on a historic afternoon in July 1932 in the Chashma Shahi Garden to thrash out the problem. This meeting proved to be of great significance. The decisions taken in it by the two after a frank, detailed and heart to heart discussion of the basic issues, have considerably influenced the State politics. It was in this meeting that Abdullah and Bazaz firmly resolved that the Kashmir Freedom Movement will be conducted on secular, progressive and democratic lines. Both of them promised to work together till the goal of complete freedom was achieved.

After Chashma Shahi meeting Abdullah and Bazaz met frequently to review progress of their mission during the succeeding months. Meanwhile, unfavourable wind began to blow in the State. The reactionary Hindus considered the various Glancy reports as a challenge to their stronghold in State politics. They could easily see that their vested interests were being demolished and if the process was allowed to continue, before long, there would be a popular government in the country which in other words would mean the rule of the Muslims—the majority community in the State. These reactionaries therefore tried their best to frighten the Government so that it might desist from becoming just towards the Muslims. Public meetings were held in which irresponsible and provocative speeches were delivered by Hindu leaders. This caused a riot in Srinagar during October and passions ran very high. It was surely not a suitable climate for introducing secular politics in the country. Though therefore the implementation of the proposal drawn in the Chashma Shahi Garden was postponed indefinitely, Abdullah and Prem Nath Bazaz continued to keep in close touch with each other.

Influenced by the writings of progressive Pandit intellectuals, published in the columns of Vitasta, the Working Committee of the Muslim Conference constituted a sub-committee in 1933 to find out ways and means of uniting Hindus and Muslims. This sub-committee could not function but it indicated that the idea of joint action in politics had taken birth...........

The Working Committee suspended the Constitution of the Conference and appointed Ghulam Abbas as "Dictator" with the purpose of either getting the grievances of Muslims redressed by correspondence with the Government or by launching a movement of civil disobedience. Abbas prepared his memorandum to the Government in consultation with Abdullah and Bazaz. It is noteworthy that while discussing the constitutional reforms for the State in the memorandum, Ghulam Abbas demanded that there should be a system of joint electorates for the proposed Legislative Assembly, a thing which has always been hateful to Muslim communalists.......

Early in 1935 Abdullah and Prem Nath Bazaz felt that the time had arrived to make the first move in the implementation of their scheme for re-orientating Kashmir politics on secular lines. They were, however, cautious not to precipitate the matters. On 1st August, 1935, they jointly started a weekly journal "The Hamdard" in Urdu to popularise the ideology and to lay the foundation of progressive Nationalism in the State. The inauguration of the first issue of the journal was performed by Dr. Saif-ud-Din Kitchlu in a big public meeting at Hazuri Bagh, Srinagar. From the very start, the Hamdard attempted to blaze a new trail in the affairs of the State. It was a standard-bearer of democracy and unity of all Kashmiris without any consideration of caste or creed they professed. Often it published articles bitterly and frankly critical of orthodox views. Its readers came from all classes and communities. In a country where all other papers were either thoroughly Muslim or totally Hindu in their outlook, the Hamdard stood alone, a class by itself. It was mainly through the sober, thoughtful and inspiring writings of this weekly that the Muslim Conference was converted into the National Conference in 1939 A.C."[1]

An attempt was made in Srinagar as early as 1933 to set up a National Conference. On 7th August, 1933, a provisional committee to that end was formed with Syed Ahmed Shah Gilani, a Christian, as President and Pandit Radhey Nath Kaul as Secretary. Of course, Pandit Prem Nath Bazaz was one of its members and in fact the brain behind it. The Committee could not make any head-way partly because neither Muslims nor Hindus felt attracted by nationalism and partly because its office bearers carried no weight with the public. In 1936, yet another effort was made by the formation of a Students' organisation known as "The Kashmir Youth League". Its declared objects were (1) to organise young men and women for the service of the country; (2) to fight by all legitimate means

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1 Freedom Struggle, p.

for the realisation of responsible Government in the State; and (3) to work for the economic, social and cultural uplift of the people. Yet another effort was made in 1937 when in August, a workers and labourers organisation known as "The Mazdur and Kisan Sabha" was formed, again in Srinagar. The first Students' conference was held in Srinagar on 7th November 1936. The second annual conference was again held here in autumn 1937 under the presidentship of Doctor Mohammad Ashraf, then Secretary of the Indian National Congress. The most prominent student leader then was Pandit Kashi Nath Bamzai, a man of great intelligence, foresight and wisdom.

The fourth annual session of the Muslim Conference was held in Srinagar on the 25th, 26th and 27th October, 1935. Chaudhri Ghulam Abbas Khan, who had been released from jail after serving a sentence of one year, was elected President for the next year. He was taken through the city in a splendidly-organised river procession which started from Chhattabal and terminated at Amirakadal. Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah seems to have taken special care to accord his estranged colleague from Jammu a really warm reception, perhaps to bring about a complete melting of the bitterness engendered in the recent past. Many non-Muslims, including Pandit Prem Nath Bazaz, Pandit Kayshup Bandhu, Jia Lal Killam and Shyam Lal Saraf, also attended the session as observers. The session was held at Pathar Masjid. Bakhshi Ghulam Mohammad was Secretary of the Reception Committee with Mir Waiz Ghulam Nabi Hamdani as President. In his presidential address, Chaudhri Ghulam Abbas said:—

> "The martyrdom of the martyrs of Kashmir had been like the touch of the Messiah for us and their sacred blood has provided a cure for our political ailments; they were all men of God whom He specially chose for the object. Had the Government, at the time of bringing constitutional reforms, at least taken note of the N.W.F.P., perhaps the continued unrest and disturbances in the State could be permanently brought to an end. So far as education, political awakening, social and cultural developments and the suitability of the people to take over the administration of the country is concerned, we can say it with confidence that the inhabitants of this State are under no circumstances and in no way, behind the people of N.W.F.P.; so if the English Government can show a sense of tolerance and liberalism in the very beginning of the introduction of reforms in the Frontier, we see no reason why the State Government should not have done the same."[1]

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1 Taseer, p. 336.

Speaking about the Hindu-Muslim unity, a theme, as we have already seen, that was being repeatedly brought into lime-light, Chaudhri Ghulam Abbas Khan said:—

> "While forgetting the bitterness of the past, I, on behalf of the Muslims of the State, very sincerely appeal to my non-Muslim countrymen that they should extend their co-operation to us. I assure them that Muslims have no intention to deprive any nation of its legitimate rights and that they are seeking justice for every one and demand for themselves only those rights that belong to them. *Let us all join together to struggle for the emancipation of our country. I hope the non-Muslim leaders will, in the interests of the country, consider my appeal courageously and honestly. They must rest assured that the real good of their nation also* lies in the same."[1]

The Conference re-elected Maulana Mohammad Saeed Masudi as General Secretary. He has also been Editor of the National Conference's official organ "The Daily Khidmat" from its very inception.

The need for a permanent Party premises, came into focus soon after the formation of the Conference in 1932. Consequently, with funds raised by Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah in Srinagar, a spacious building was constructed in the grounds adjacent to Pathar Masjid; it was named Mujahid Manzil. Apart from several rooms in the ground floor which housed Party offices and spacious lawns, the building has a hall and a few residential rooms in the first floor. The General Council and the Working Committee have since held their meetings here. Bakhshi Ghulam Mohammad was in-charge of the project.

Quaid-e-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah, who had returned from England and re-entered the Indian political scene by assuming, on great public demand, presidentship of the All India Muslim League, paid a short visit to Srinagar in 1936. This was his second visit to the Valley; these will be dealt with alongwith his third and final visit which came about in 1944.

GILGIT LEASED TO BRITAIN

With the failure of the Round Table Conference, the British Government gave its decision which is known as the Communal Award and which envisaged separate electorate for different communities. In 1935, the British Government enforced a constitutional measure known as the Government of India Act of 1935. On the provincial level, it introduced a limited autonomy while at the centre, it envisaged

1 Taseer, p. 341-342.



Muslim Conference Workers in Srinagar with President of the Party in 1935.

a Federation, consisting of both the British as well as Princely India. Maharaja Hari Singh had attended the Round Table Conference as a delegate and, in his speech, had largely supported the aspirations of the Indian National Congress. The Congress did not accept that part of the Act which related to the coming into being of the Federation but accepted, though with reservations, the part that related to the provincial autonomy. The Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference could not close its eyes towards these important developments. It demanded that the Maharaja should not join the Federation without prior consultation with the representatives of the State people and that in any case, if the State was compelled to join it, only elected representatives of the people had the right to sit in the Federal Parliament.

It was also during this year that Gilgit was leased to the British Government for a period of sixty years. Gilgit had assumed great importance once again in the British colonial policy. With the overthrow of the Czarist regime, a Communist dictatorship had not only seized power but had since consolidated its hold on Soviet Russia. This had brought Communism almost to the door-steps of Kashmir. Britain had always considered Russian presence across the Pamirs a constant threat to its Indian and Far East Empire. With the growth of Nazi militarism and Mussolini's Fascism in Europe, the danger posed by the presence of Russia just across the Pamirs, assumed greater importance. According to British military experts, it necessitated Britain's direct presence in Gilgit. The civil and military administration of the Political Agency of Gilgit was already in the hands of the Viceroy. A vassal of the British whose kingdom was a gift from the Imperial Government to his great-grand-father and which itself depended for its existence on British support, the Maharaja had identical interests with the British; so a lease agreement was executed on 29th March, 1935 between the Maharaja and Col. L.E. Lang, the Resident, on behalf of the British Government, which authorised the Viceroy to assume the civil and military government of the civil district of Gilgit subject to the condition that the territory would continue to be included within the dominion of the Maharaja and the rights pertaining to mining would also be reserved to the Kashmir Government. It was also agreed that the flag of His Highness shall permanently remain hoisted at the Headquarters of the Agency; that ceremonial salutes would be fired on such occasions as the birthday of His Highness and Hindu religious festivals, Dussehra, Basant, etc; that British army shall not be entitled to pass, in normal circumstances, through areas lying on the right bank of Indus. The agreement was signed at Jammu and Mr. M.A.F. Metcalf, Secretary of the Foreign Ministry of the Government of India, signed it at Delhi on 3rd April, 1935, on behalf of the Viceroy.

Some Hindu historians have vainly but designedly tried to link the lease of Gilgit with the Muslim liberation movement in 1931 and tried to create an impression that it was British-inspired in order to get Gilgit on lease. Apart from the fact that there is no evidence at all to support the charge of British inspiration, they need not have resorted to any pressure tactics in order to get the lease. Apart from being, by Treaty, bound to satisfy Britain's strategic requirements born, in this case, out of fears of a foreign invasion, the Maharaja's interests in the region did not run counter to those of his overlords; on the contrary, these were exactly identical. Although British imperialism and the Indian Princes played a complimentary role, Britain could have survived without the Princes, but the latter could in no case have survived even for a few months without the mighty protection that British presence in the sub-continent made them available. In fact, as we have already seen, Hari Singh was the only member in his entire dynasty whom they brought up from his very childhood as a protege. The insinuation has been invented to defame the Muslim Movement. It is customary for Hindus to condemn all Muslim movements in the sub-continent as British-inspired.

Muslim Conference did not hold any annual session in 1936. On the 8th of May, a Responsible Government Day was observed by the Party. In response to an appeal issued by its President, Ch. Ghulam Abbas, for co-operation, in Srinagar, Poonch and Jammu not only were the meetings presided over by non-Muslims but they also constituted the principal speakers. Public meetings were also held in Reasi, Rajouri, Bhimber, Ranbirsinghpura, Mirpur, Muzaffarabad, Bandipura, Bijbihara, Handwara and Pattan. Resolutions were passed condemning the State Assembly as inadequate and unrepresentative and demanding the setting up of a Legislative Assembly to which the Government should be fully responsible. This demand was particularly necessitated by the experience in the Assembly which showed that it could do little for the good of the people and the only advantage it provided was that Muslims were able to use it as a platform for publicising their grievances. On 29th October, 1936, Sardar Budh Singh, addressing its summer session, condemned it as a toy Assembly and tendered his resignation. Following in his foot-steps, Muslim Conference members tendered their resignations on 27th November in protest against the rejection of its demand for the withdrawal of the grazing-tax bill. It is interesting to point out that even the Dogra Sabha of Jammu had earlier demanded a better constitution than the one that was in force. By-elections to the seats vacated by Muslim Conference members were held in February, 1937, and the same members were again returned on Party tickets. This again demonstrated the unique popularity of the Party among Muslim masses.

The fifth annual session of the Conference was held in Poonch city on the 14th, 15th and 16th of May, 1937. Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, who was elected President, said:—

"The demand for a powerful Assembly and responsible Government is not new but has been voiced from our platform from the very beginning of the freedom movement, especially since 1934..... We have full confidence that the poor among the Hindus and the Sikhs will in near future join hands with us in our struggle for the achievement of responsible Government. We shall continue our efforts in this behalf.

In our neighbouring country, the British India, Hindus are in a majority in some provinces while Muslims are in a majority in some others. *Our declarations with regard to the safeguarding of minority rights are undoubtedly far better than those which are contained in the relevant resolution passed by the Indian National Congress. We have not resorted to stock phrases and thus practically avoided grant of rights to the minorities (the reference is obviously to the Indian National Congress)* but have in clear words accepted their rights and offered them an agreement. If the State minorities insist that they should get the same rights in the State which will be available to the minorities in the subcontinent, we have no objection in accepting the same. It is now for our Hindu and Sikh brothers that without wasting any further time they should join hands with us so that we get rid of the irresponsible Government. From amongst the non-Muslims, a group has already come in the field who sincerely wish to remove poverty and hunger from the country and who sincerely desire to associate themselves with the Muslim demand for responsible Government. It is their desire that we evolve a common platform so that the caravan may move ahead towards its goal with redoubled strength. It is our duty to welcome the desire for co-operation on the part of this group."

Referring to the Government of India Act of 1935, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah said:—

"The second part of the constitution which relates to the setting up of a Federation, has a direct bearing on the States and their inhabitants because representation from the States has been provided in the Federal Assembly as well as the Federal Council. *The way the British statesmen, while drafting the constitution, callously ignored the rights of eight crore citizens of Indian States, constitutes the darkest page in the*

*dark history behind the enactment of this constitution. These eight crore citizens have been treated like cattle, whose views and desires have received no consideration at all from the British Government. The right to nominate their representatives has been given to such persons (Princes themselves) of whose ill-treatment they are already tired. If the intention of the British Government by bringing the States in the Federation is to secure the support of the States, then it is clear that it can be done only by winning the sympathies of the eight crore inhabitants of the States and not by getting the support of a limited number of Nawabs and Maharajas......*Those leaders of India (both Congress and League had adopted non-intervention in Indian States as their official policy) who feel hesitant at this time from representing these eight crore inhabitants will consider it necessary for their success on the coming into force of the Federation to enlist the support of these people."[1]

In a resolution the Maharaja was asked not to join the Federation and if he desired to do so, then to get the State representatives for the Centre elected by the people; it was also demanded that the representative character of the Assembly be increased and the Cabinet be made responsible to it. Among other resolutions, pertaining to local problems, the Conference demanded the setting up of an Intermediate College in Poonch, the opening of a new hospital in Srinagar and the establishment of a University.

PROVOCATION AND APOLOGY

Two incidents of disrespect to Muslim religion occurred at this time. It appears that some Kashmiri Pandits were bent upon creating Hindu-Muslim tension. The first incident occurred in Srinagar on 7th June, 1937. Addressing a meeting of Pandits at Shital Nath, Pandit Shiv Narain Fotedar, President of the "Yovak Sabha", said:—

> "Hindus have the same respect for cow which the Muslims have for Prophet Mohammad" (Peace be upon him).

It was a deliberate attempt to provoke Muslims. No Muslim was present in the meeting but as the intention was mischief, it was reproduced in the Sabha organ, daily "Martand". Naturally there was resentment among Muslims who closed their shops and assembled in the Jamia Masjid. The Government enforced section 144. Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah being away at Bijbihara, Mir Waiz Mohammad Yusuf Shah who had by now almost completely withdrawn from the political field, was persuaded to lead a procession in defiance of the ban. Near Bahoori Kadal, the police tried, unsuccessfully, to block its passage. It resorted to

1 Taseer, p. 350.

firing, resulting in one death and injuries to a score of people. The young martyr's cot was placed at the head of the procession which then continued its march. On the way, police resorted to a lathi charge; Mir Waiz received several injuries and, to make the confusion worst confounded, he was forthwith arrested. As soon as the news reached Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, he hurried back to Srinagar and in a statement condemned Shiv Narain Fotedar and publishers of Martand; he also condemned the police brutalities and expressed his total solidarity with the rank and file of the Muslim community. Casting aside his personal differences, he said:—

> "Religion is nobody's monopoly. If Mir Waiz has been compelled to have super in jail, we shall certainly be with him at dinner."[1]

Afraid of the grave consequences that were bound to ensue, Fotedar immediately tendered an unqualified apology; Martand also apologised and pleaded mis-reporting as an excuse. This did not satisfy Muslims. A few days later, Shiv Narain Fotedar, accompanied by Bakhshi Ghulam Mohammad, took a round of the city in an open car and tendered personal apology at important centres.

The second incident took place in Poonch city. A Kashmiri Pandit doctor who was Superintendent of the jail, was alleged, in course of an inspection, to have thrown from a shelf, a copy of the Holy Book. Muslims immediately closed business. Thousands of people armed with axes and whatever other weapons could be locally available, gathered in the vicinity of the palace and squatted there for many days. Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah accompanied by Sardar Budh Singh and Pandit Prem Nath Bazaz hurried to the town. The Government tendered an unqualified apology; the Superintendent was immediately suspended and an inquiry instituted against him.

Mir Waiz was unconditionally released, after 15 days.

A few months later, some Hindu temples in the city were set ablaze at exactly the same time and, in some cases, some of the statues were disfigured. Some Muslims were arrested, one of whom, Jumma, turned an approver. The commitment proceedings were held in the Court of Khawaja Abdul Ghani, Magistrate Ist Class, Poonch, who later retired as Law Secretary cum Judge High Court of the Azad Kashmir Government. Mirza Mohammad Afzal Beg and Mian Ahmed Yar were deputed by the Party to defend the accused.

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1 Taseer, p. 355.

Most of them were discharged in the committal Court and the remainder acquitted by the Sessions Judge as there was no evidence to support the charge.

In November, 1937, an organisation of labourers was set up in Srinagar under the leadership of Khawaja Ghulam Mohi-ud-Din Kara. On 14th November, it observed a Labour Day. The labour movement was supported by Pandit Prem Nath Bazaz. Mr. Faiz Ahmed Piracha from Punjab, who came to Srinagar from Peshawar in 1929 and was actively associated with the labour movement, was externed on the allegation of being a Communist. Pandit Prem Nath Bazaz was prohibited from making any speech for six months.

M.C. SUCCESS IN ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS

The term of the Legislative Assembly, which had been elected for a period of three years, expired on 31st December, 1937. In the previous election, despite unfavourable circumstances, the Muslim Conference had been able to capture sixteen out of twenty one seats. The voters who constituted only three percent of the population, belonged either to the upper or the upper-middle class. Even then the Government was afraid of elections as it expected the Muslim Conference to capture the whole lot of Muslim seats. Efforts were, therefore, already afoot to create dissension in their ranks. While in Kashmir the loyalists and big land-lords were available to oppose its candidates, Jammu province provided a more fruitful field because of tribal rivalries among Rajputs, Jats and Gujars.

But despite all-out Government efforts to deprive Muslim Conference of as many seats as possible, the latter was able to capture nineteen out of twenty one seats. Those elected on its ticket are as follows:—

1. Mian Ahmed Yar, Srinagar;
2. Agha Saeed Hussain Shah Jalali, Srinagar;
3. Haji Ahmedullah Shahdad, Srinagar;
4. Mr. M. A. Hafeez, Srinagar;
5. Khawaja Ghulam Mohammad Sadiq, Srinagar;
6. Khawaja Akbar Dar, Avantipura;
7. Khawaja Ghulam Nabi, Kulgam;
8. Mirza Mohammad Afzal Beg, Anantnag;
9. Khawaja Ghulam Mohammad, Badgam;
10. Maulvi Mohammad Saeed, Muzaffarabad;
11. Mirza Attaullah Khan, Reasi;

12. Chaudhri Hameedullah Khan, Jammu;
13. Khawaja Mohammad Khalil, Udhampur;
14. Mr. A. R. Saghar, Jammu;
15. Lt. Fazlur Rehman, Bhimber;
16. Sardar Fateh Mohammad Khan, Haveli Mehnder (Poonch);
17. Subedar Khan Mohammad Khan, Sudhnutti Bagh, Poonch;
18. Qazi Abdul Ghani, Baramula;
19. Khawaja Mohammad Akbar Soofi, Handwara.

The following two gentlemen were elected as independents but soon afterwards joined the Muslim Conference Parliamentary Group:—

1. Pir Zia-ud-Din, Badgam;
2. Chaudhri Abdul Karim, Mirpur.

Pir Zia-ud-Din had been denied Party ticket and it goes to his credit that he cast aside his personal bitterness in the larger interests of Muslims.

Among non-Muslims, the following were elected:—

1. Doctor Balram Das, Jammu city;
2. Lala Dina Nath, Jammu city;
3. Chaudhri Lachhman Singh, Jammu district;
4. Mr. Shiv Lal, Udhampur;
5. Wazir Ganga Ram, Reasi;
6. Chaudhri Avatar Singh, Kathua;
7. Lala Ajudhaya Nath, Mirpur;
8. Sardar Dhian Singh, Mirpur-Poonch; Sikh;
9. Pandit Amarnath Kak, Srinagar city;
10. Pandit Shiv Narain Fotedar, Srinagar city;
11. Pandit Deva Kaul, Kashmir;
12. Sardar Kirpal Singh, Kashmir; Sikh.

Among the nominated members, were:—

1. Rai Bahadur Pandit Amar Nath Purbi (Chamber of Commerce);
2. Mr. Jigmat Dadool (Ladakh Budhists);
3. Kahloon Labzang Chewang (Ladakh Budhists);
4. Mr. Mohammad Ali Shah, Askardu;
5. Mr. Wajid Ali Shah, Kargil;
6. Raja Hussain Khan, Astore;

7. Maulvi Mohammad Jawad Ansari, North Kashmir;
8. Khawaja Abdur Rahim Bande, Srinagar;
9. Mr. Ram Rakha Mal, Jammu;
10. Mr. Jagat Ram Aryan, Udhampur;
11. Mr. Satya Pal Vohra, Srinagar;
12. Sardar Mal Singh Khosla, Udhampur;
13. Babu Ram Das, Chinhani;
14. Lala Ram Lal, Poonch;
15. Sheikh Abdul Hamid, Jammu;
16. Pandit Lok Nath Sharma, Jammu;
17. Munshi Assadullah, Srinagar;
18. Kotwal Shiv Lal, Jammu.

The first session of the Assembly was held at Rajgarh palace in Srinagar on 7th September, 1938. Mian Ahmed Yar was again elected Leader of the Muslim Conference Assembly Party and Mirza Mohammad Afzal Beg, its Deputy Leader. Immediately after taking oath, Mian Ahmed Yar made the following statement:—

> "Sir, under the circumstances prevailing in the State at present I and my Party should not have attended the session even for a minute but as we had to take the oath of allegiance to His Highness, the Maharaja Bahadur, we did not consider it proper to absent ourselves on this occasion. However, as a protest against the repressive policy of the Government, we walk out and will not take part in the proceedings of the House."

A meeting of the General Council was held on 5th January, 1938, at Srinagar under the presidentship of Chaudhri Ghulam Abbas Khan, then Vice President of the Party. A resolution was passed expressing its solidarity with the Muslims of Palestine. In another resolution, the Maharaja was called upon to desist from joining the proposed Indian Federation and in any case, announce, for public information, the terms and conditions of accession. The Council also demanded the appointment of Muslims as Prime Minister and Chief Secretary. It may be noted here that among the 28 Prime Ministers the State employed since 1846, no Muslim ever held the post up to 1948. No Muslim had until the passage of the resolution ever held the post of the Chief Secretary.

Sometime later, the Maharaja increased the number of his Cabinet from three to four and appointed Muslims to two of them but neither of the two, Sir Abdus Samad and Nawab Khusro Jang, belonged to the State. The same year, a Hindu-Sikh political conference was held in Jammu. It appears to have been officially inspired to unite non-Muslims in order to support the Government's possible participation in the Federation.

CHAPTER INDEX

MUSLIM CONFERENCE RE-NAMED NATIONAL CONFERENCE

CHAPTER XIII

Muslim Conference Re-named National Conference

INITIATING THE MOVE

The sixth annual session of the Muslim Conference was held in Jammu on the 25th, 26th and 27th March, 1938. Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah was elected President. Sheikh Mohammad Amin, M.L.A., headed the Reception Committee. Addressing the session, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah said:—

"It is essential that all those people who suffer from the present system of government should get an opportunity to join in the struggle for the achievement of responsible Government. Who are these people? They are not only Muslims but also Hindus and Sikhs, untouchables and Budhists, nay, all citizens of the State. Some Muslims have a misconception that all non-Muslims are living a life of comfort. This is not correct. Only a few thousand among them stand protected against inequalities and disabilities otherwise the rest of them are like you, poor, indebted, illiterate and suffer from other excesses. The demand for responsible Government is not meant for eighty percent Muslims alone but for all inhabitants of the State; therefore it is necessary to march together with the twenty percent non-Muslims.

The main problem now before us, therefore, is to initiate joint action and form a united front against the forces that stand in the way of the achievement of our goal. This will require re-naming of our

organisation as a non-communal political party, necessitating amendments in its constitution.

I reiterate today what I have said so often: firstly, we must end communalism by ceasing to think in terms of Muslims and non-Muslims when discussing our political problems. Secondly there must be universal sufferage on the basis of joint electorate. Without these two, democracy is lifeless.

You complain that Hindus belonging to the vested interests are reactionary and stand in the way of our progress. But have we not had the same experience in the case of capitalist Muslims also? It is significant as well as hopeful that despite many difficulties, some non-Muslims have co-operated with us though their number is very small. Their sincerity and moral courage make us feel their strength. We must therefore open our doors to all such Hindus and Sikhs who, like ourselves, believe in freeing the country from the shackles of an irresponsible rule."[1]

In the Subjects Committee meeting a resolution was introduced by Maulvi Mohammad Saeed, that the name of the Conference be changed to that of All Jammu and Kashmir Political Conference which, in other words, meant to open its doors to non-Muslims by dropping the word "Muslim". Raja Mohammad Akbar from Mirpur supported the resolution. It was opposed by A. R. Saghar, Sheikh Mohammad Amin and Abdul Majid Qarshi who said that the "Millat came first while politics came later". Mr. Saghar and Sheikh Mohammad Amin introduced an amendment seeking to defer its consideration in order to elicit public opinion so that the same could be taken up again in the next session. Introducing the amendment, Mr. Saghar said, "politics came first and religion and millat, later" but at the same time he was strongly of the opinion that without taking into account the general sentiments of the people which could not be known as the resolution had been abruptly introduced, it was not proper to bring about such a far-reaching change. The logic was irresistible. It is a tribute to the political rules of the game then in vogue, that the amendment was accepted by the Subjects Committee and the resolution deferred for further consideration.

In May, 1938, a party known as National Congress was set up in Srinagar, with Khawaja Mohammad Umar Butt B.A. as President and Pandit Ragho Nath Veshnavi as General Secretary. Among its other founding members were Mr. Madan Lal, Veer Prakash, Seth Kishori Lal

1 Taseer, p. 361.

and Khawaja Ali Mohammad Butt of Basant Bagh. The Party had no links whatsoever with the Indian National Congress. It merged, later, with the National Conference. In April, 1938, an association named National Conference was formed in Jammu with Mr. S. A. Sheikh as President.

On 28th June, 1938, the Working Committee of the Muslim Conference met in Srinagar to consider the question of changing the name of the party. After marathon discussions lasting five days and spread over fifty-two hours, it passed the following resolution:—

> "Whereas in the opinion of the Working Committee the time has now come when all the progressive forces in the country should be rallied under one banner to fight for the achievement of Responsible Government, the Working Committee recommends to the General Council that in the forthcoming annual session, the name and the constitution of the organisation be so altered and amended that all people who wish to participate in the political struggle are enabled to become members of the Conference irrespective of their caste, creed or religion."

According to Mr. Rashid Taseer, Chaudhri Ghulam Abbas Khan, Sheikh Ahmed Din Banihali, Mr. Abdul Majid Qarshi and some other leaders opposed the resolution whereupon they were asked to resign from the party.[1] This they did not.

The resolution had now to be approved by a plenary session of the Party but before it could be done, a clash was precipitated by the Government. Raja Mohammad Akbar Khan of Mirpur had, sometime back, been sentenced to three years rigorous imprisonment and a fine of Rs. 100/- in connection with a speech delivered in criticism of the Government. Raja Akbar is remembered as a selfless political leader. A zamindar by birth with some landed property, he was the pillar of the Movement in his district. Simple of habits, he led an austere life and had great compassion for the poor. He founded and edited a weekly, "Such", published from Mirpur which was known for its fearless advocacy of the down-trodden.

THE 1938 AGITATION

The Responsible Government Demand Day was observed on 5th August 1938. Processions were taken out, public meetings held and resolutions adopted repudiating the existing system of irresponsible Government and expressing full faith in the ultimate establishment of complete responsible Government. Appeals were issued to all patriotic

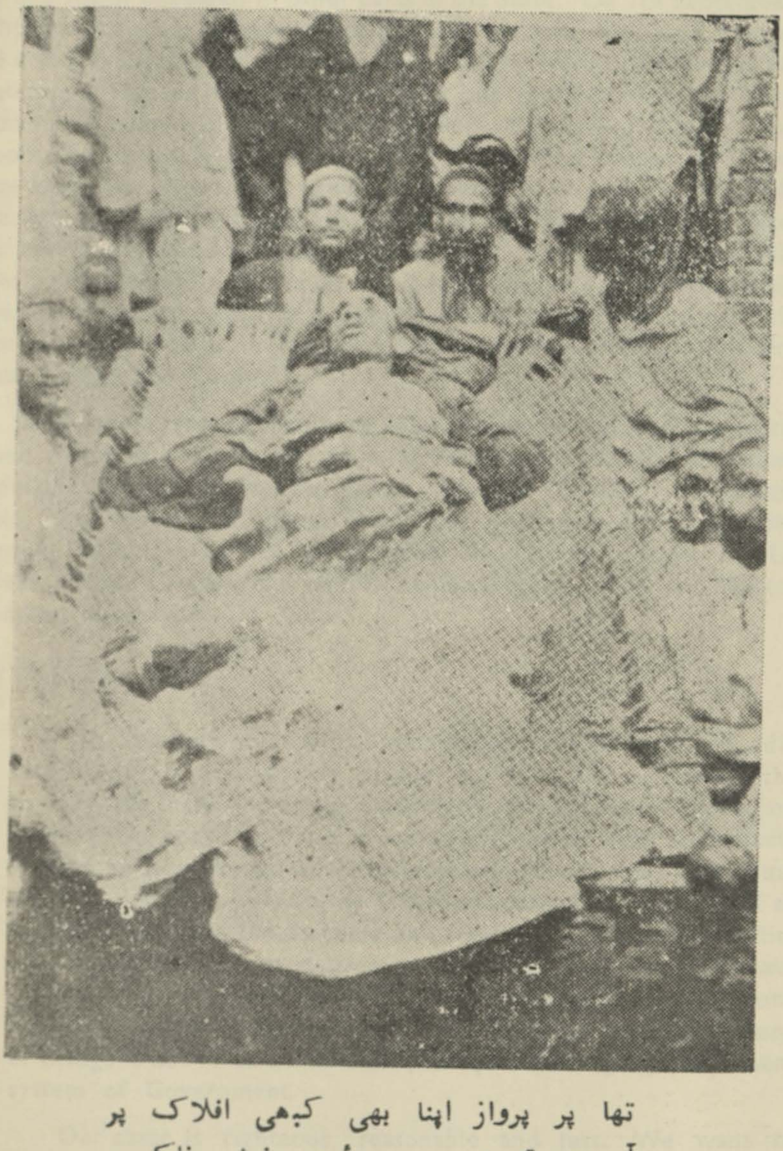
1 *Ibid.*, p. 367.

elements "to muster under the banner of freedom and prepare for the coming struggle for victory which alone could usher in complete political, economic and social emancipation". Prem Nath Bazaz, Jia Lal Killam, Kayshup Bandhu, Shyam Lal Saraf and Sardar Budh Singh participated in these meetings.

The passing of such a heavy sentence against a political worker of standing could not but be taken note of by the Party High Command. It, therefore, had a spontaneous reaction. Hartals and public meetings were immediately ordered all over the State. It is even otherwise customary for political workers to act as a sort of brotherhood whenever any member is victimised by the Government. Raja Mohammad Akbar had appealed against his conviction. It was on the rejection of the appeal that the agitation started. Mr. A. R. Saghar composed a poem about the incident, which contained the following stanza:

میر پور کے مجاھد اکبر
بات کرتے تھے ادعا کرکے
مسترد ہوگئی اپیل بھی آج
بات بھی کھوئی التجا کرکے

On 27th August, 1938, the Government enforced section 144 in Srinagar. On the next day, a public meeting, in defiance of the prohibitory orders, was held at Hazratbal which was addressed by Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, Pandit Prem Nath Bazaz, Maulana Masudi, Pandit Kayshup Bandhu, Pandit Jia Lal Killam and Khawaja Ghulam Mohammad Sadiq. Another meeting was scheduled to be held at Pratap park on the next morning but some of the leaders, including Sardar Budh Singh, were arrested immediately after the Hazratbal meeting. Immediately after Sheikh Abdullah's arrest, the city observed a hartal and processions began to be taken out in various localities. Hindus, as a community, abstained from the agitation and even kept open their business premises. Women and children also brought out processions. At Amirakadal, the car of Mr. Ayyengar trampled down a youth while a procession was parading the business centre. The injured man was removed to the hospital by the Prime Minister himself. One Abdul Kabir Sheikh, son of Mohammad Sheikh, aged 35, resident of Abiguzar, Srinagar, was killed as a result of a lathi charge resorted to by the police in Maisuma bazar. One Mohammad Ismail Najar, son of Samad Najar, aged 19½ years, resident of Makhdoom Sahib was killed by military firing, again in Maisuma bazar. Both were buried at Mazar-e-Shohda. Fourteen persons were arrested on the 29th. Pandit Jia Lal Killam and Pandit Bazaz were arrested on the 30th. The procession taken out on the 3rd day, terminated at



تھا پر پرواز اپنا بھی کبھی افلاک پر
آج ہم قبروں میں سوئے ہیں فرش خاک پر

Khanqah-e-Mualla where Sadar-ud-Din Mujahid offered himself for arrest. Mr. Saghar was arrested in Jammu on 29th August. On the next day a protest meeting was held condemning the arrest of political leaders. The agitation continued for a few weeks mainly in the city of Srinagar but partly in other parts of the State. On 7th September, eight persons were arrested from Khanqah-e-Mualla, nine from Kangan and eighteen from Saura. Twenty three persons were arrested on 9th September. Among those arrested from the muffasils included Mirza Mohammad Afzal Beg from Islamabad, Sufi Mohammad Akbar from Sopore, Sheikh Mohammad Akbar and Mr. Mohammad Maqbool Sherwani from Baramula. A women's procession was taken out in Baramula. Chaudhri Ghulam Abbas Khan came to Srinagar a few days after the arrest of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah. He addressed a public meeting at Khanqah-e-Mualla on 15th September and was immediately taken into custody. All the leaders were sentenced to six months imprisonment. About a thousand persons were arrested, including about 5 dozen non-Muslims.

Before their arrest, a manifesto known as the National Demands was issued under the signatures of twelve leaders, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, Maulana Mohammad Saeed, Khawaja Ghulam Mohammad Sadiq, Mian Ahmad Yar, Mirza Mohammad Afzal Beg, Pandit Kayshup Bandhu, Pandit Prem Nath Bazaz, Sardar Budh Singh, Pandit Jia Lal Killam, Bakhshi Ghulam Mohammad, Pandit Shyam Lal Saraf and Doctor Shamboo Nath Peshin.

The Declaration said :—

> "The ever-growing menace of unemployment amongst our educated young men and also among the illiterate masses in the country, the incidence of numerous taxes, the burden of exorbitant revenue, the appalling waste of human life due to want of adequate modern medical assistance, the miserable plight of uncared for thousands of labourers outside the State boundaries, and, in face of all this, the patronage that is being extended in the shape of subsidies and other amenities to outside capitalists, as also the top-heavy administration that daily becomes heavier, point to only one direction that the present conditions can never be bettered as long as change is not made in the basic principles underlying the present system of Government.
>
> Our cause is righteous, reasonable and just. We want to be the makers of our own destinies and we want to shape things according to our choice."[1]

1 Inside Kashmir, p. 196.

ENDORSEMENT BY THE PLENARY SESSION

Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah was released from Muzaffarabad jail on 28th February, 1939. The release of other leaders followed.

The aloofness of Hindu and Sikh masses from the Movement sent a wave of opposition among Muslims against the likely change of the Muslim Conference into the National Conference. The educated Muslims were particularly apprehensive. Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, therefore, undertook a tour of the Valley to check the growth of opposition to the move. In this he unfortunately succeeded because none among the leading lights of the Party came forward either to lead the opposition or to organise it. So many people have now come forward either to take credit for having opposed the move which, in fairness to history, they never opposed or to offer excuses for their default but the whole truth, as it stands out, is that for one reason or other, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah was allowed to push the whole Party in the direction of his liking and thus cause irreparable damage to the Muslim Cause.

A meeting of the General Council was held in Srinagar on 27th April, 1939, to consider the 28th June W. C. resolution. Unfortunately, details of the deliberations have not been available. All that is known is that it confirmed the resolution.

Consequently, a special session of the Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference was held at Srinagar on the 10th and 11th June, 1939, under the presidentship of the known-leftist Khawaja Ghulam Mohammad Sadiq. It was attended by all the prominent leaders and workers of the Party. Maulana Mohammad Saeed Masudi, Chairman of the Reception Committee, introduced the following resolution:—

> "The special session of the Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference approves the Working Committee Resolution No. 5 of 28th June, 1938, for the change of the name of the Conference and for bringing about the necessary amendments and changes in its Constitution, which was confirmed by the General Council in its session held on the 27th of April, 1939.
>
> This Conference, therefore, decides that it shall henceforth be named as All Jammu and Kashmir National Conference and every citizen of Jammu and Kashmir, who is a major, whether male or female, shall, irrespective of his religion or race, be entitled to

become a member of the Conference, provided he undertakes in writing to have the setting up of a Responsible Government and the securance of individual liberties as his political goal.

This session also resolves that until the next annual session, the existng Working Committee and the General Council, the office bearers and delegates to this Conference shall function in the same capacity as office bearers and members of the All Jammu and Kashmir National Conference."[1]

Khawaja Ghulam Mohammad Sadiq said in his presidential address:—

"Any responsible Government cannot be the Government of any particular class or party or religious group but, on the other hand, every individual comprising the forty lac inhabitants of the State will be a component part of the same and will have the same share in running it; it is, therefore, essential that in the struggle for the attainment of responsible Government, every citizen of the State, irrespective of religion or race, should be able to participate and make his contribution; for channelising these sacrifices and conducting the Movement in an orderly manner, a common platform in the shape of a single Organisation is the first important step.

The proposal (to change the name of the Party moved in the last session at Jammu) *was kept pending so that on the one hand, public opinion is elicited and on the other, the doubts existing in certain sections of Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs in this behalf, could be removed. But much time had not as yet elapsed when political conditions in the sub-continent began rapidly moving. The question of the State's participation in the Federation assumed greater importance; the Viceroy intensified his efforts to win over the Princes and our State silently decided to join the Federation. It is for this reason that the question of forming a common platform could* not be further postponed."[2]

It seems that at early stages Ch. Ghulam Abbas Khan had reservations about the change. He was apprehensive that Muslim demands such as repeal of the penal provision relating to cow-slaughter or legal impediments in the way of a Hindu's conversion to Islam, would, in a joint Hindu-Muslim platform, recede, as of necessity, to the background. It may be said to the credit of both the leaders—Abdullah and Abbas, that despite their differences, arising mainly out of what may be termed as "personal let downs" at crucial moments in their respective careers, which had

1 Islah, 16th June, 1939.
2 Taseer, p. 377.

gradually embittered their never-too-warm relationship, the reality of their essentially-complimentary role—one couldn't speak Punjabi while to the other, Kashmiri was like the proverbial Greek, did not escape their sight. At the same time, both were anxious to avoid a division among Muslims that would have weakened their weight and certainly they didn't want or perhaps could not even bear the destruction of a platform that had been built so laboriously and at such a huge cost in human sufferings. Behind-the-scene discussions therefore continued even after the Working Committee resolution. Mr. A.R. Saghar who played a leading role in the parleys has told this writer that he had been, from the very beginning, of a socialistic frame of mind and was therefore enthusiastically in favour of the change. These discussions were successful and consequently, Mr. Saghar announced in a public meeting held in the Mujahid Manzil Srinagar on 30th March that the questions that had been agitating the minds of the Jammu leaders and especially that of Ch. Ghulam Abbas Khan, regarding the renaming of the Party, had been satisfactorily answered by the leaders from Kashmir valley particularly through the efforts of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah and that they were now in full agreement with the proposed change. The meeting was also addressed by Hakim Mohammad Hussain.[1]

Sometime later, a public meeting was held in Jammu before the General Council meeting of the Party but after the Working Committee meeting in which the decision to change the Party name had been taken, which was addressed by both Chaudhri Ghulam Abbas Khan and Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah. Chaudhri Ghulam Abbas told the meeting that the differences that had developed between him and Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah regarding the change of the Party name and related matters, "had been resolved and that in future he will continue to work with Sheikh Sahib for the betterment of all the people inhabiting the State". He also announced the agreement of party workers from Jammu. Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah told the meeting that the State people were divided into three groups: those who supported the Muslim League, the Hindu Mahasabhites and a "few poor Congress-men", but that actually "the tussle was between the have's and the have not's " and that, in his opinion, "no betterment of the people could be expected so long as the political struggle was not launched on these lines."

CH. GHULAM ABBAS AND SAGHAR SUPPORT NATIONALISM

Consequently all the important leaders from Jammu, including Ch. Ghulam Abbas Khan, Mr. A. R. Saghar, Chaudhri Hameedullah Khan, Hakim Mohammad Hussain etc. attended the special session and

1 Al-Islah, 21st April, 1939.

except for Chaudhri Hameedullah, supported the Working Committee resolution to rename the Party as All Jammu and Kashmir National Conference. Reproduced below is the full text of the speech delivered by Chaudhri Ghulam Abbas Khan in the special session:

"Since the question involved, in so far as the Muslims of Jammu and Kashmir are concerned, is one of life and death, it is necessary that I should fully state my scattered thoughts. I make bold to say that whatever we did since 1931, was done from a communal platform and generally speaking, it was for the political and religious rights of the Muslims because, though constituting 80% of the population, they were leading an oppressed life. *During these 8 years, we have tried to relieve them of these difficulties and we are thankful to God that we have succeeded in doing so. As times change, the circumstances and the surroundings also change. The position of Associations can be compared to children who grow with the passage of time. Whatever we did so far was well and good but now our needs have increased and to put an end to the unresponsive character of the government, it has become necessary to bring all the communities on a common platform. It is true that Muslims are oppressed but it is also true that Hindus are also oppressed*, though some of them are pro-Government and on account of their service interests, are not prepared to co-operate with us. What we want is to put an end not only to the oppression under which we Muslims are labouring but from which sections of the Hindu population are also equally suffering. *With the passage of time, the thoughts and surroundings also change. The political robes which we donned eight years back, have not only grown old but have also become outworn and thread-bare. We now need to wear robes which would be a source of pride for us as well as a matter of pride in the eyes of the world.*

A very important matter that is presently engaging my mind is that we should have been today addressing Hindus and Sikhs but Maulana Saeed addressed Muslims and I too am addressing them which shows that we are not as yet fully awakened and what we have done so far, looks like having ploughed in the sand. *I am by nature a pessimist and temperamentally lean towards despair.*

Those Muslims who are opposing the move to rename the Muslim Conference as National Conference, are the same people who have hitherto been opposing the Muslim Conference. The Government machinery is also opposing the renaming of the Party because it thinks that if Muslims take this step, they will succeed in their struggle for the attainment of

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1 Al-Islah, 16th June, 1939.

Responsible government. Alongwith them, the non-Muslim communalists are also opposing the move. This combined opposition unmasks the real motives of the Opposition.

Our old system is changing into a new one; some misunderstanding and confusion is therefore not unnatural. *The first misunderstanding is that Sheikh Sahib and his colleagues have sold themselves to the Congress or someone else (the reference is to Mr. Ayyengar) and it is said that we have become the disciples of Gandhiji. Let me state that we are the followers of none except the Holy Quran. Gandhiji is an acknowledged leader of India but the statements issued by him regarding the recent happenings in Travancore and Rajkot are disappointing. His opinion is that people living in Indian States should strive for agreements with their rulers and bow before them but we cannot make applications and supplications to Mr. Ayyengar for our demands. We will secure our rights bravely and courageously. You should not expect us to become disciples of Gandhiji but in so far as his followers and disciples are concerned, we have the same place for them here as we have for those who differ with him.*

Whichever party from outside the State extends its support and help, we will be ready to accept it. It is said that we are opposed to the Muslim League. I think Mr. Jinnah is a capable politician. He has a prominent place in the British-Indian politics. It is his view that the majority should gain the confidence of the minority. At this moment, we are pursuing the same policy. In the ultimate analysis, since the platform is common, we have no links with any communal organisation but if Muslim League wishes to render help in our joint demands, we will be ready to accept the same but we will not be prepared to sell our freedom of conscience to any outside organisation.

The question now is that after the Muslim Conference is changed into the National Conference, who will project their demands but then, the important goal of the National Conference is to protect the interests of all communities and it will, therefore, protect the political and religious rights of Muslims. My nationalism is to live and let live. It is to remove the disabilities from which I am suffering and at the same time, remove the disabilities from which others are suffering. *It is true that the attitude of the Government towards Muslims has been unmerciful. It is also true that the problem they are faced with is how to protect their interests but people should have confidence in us and should remember that the statements issued by Sardar Budh Singh and Pandit Prem Nath Bazaz in connection with cow-killing, were much stronger than the statements issued by us. The minorities will take care of our rights*

and we shall take care of their rights and I have no doubt that we shall be able to solve these problems with the large-heartedness of our non-Muslim brethren. It is said that Islam is in danger. It is possible that we are sinners but as against those who have appropriated to themselves the exclusive right to speak for Islam, we are better Muslims and have a bigger capacity to defend the rights of Muslims than these people. It is ridiculous to suggest that 80% Muslims are afraid of 20% Hindus. Why are Muslims afraid these days? It is because we are not true Muslims. We are Muslims by profession and not by our actions but in fact there is no danger now."[1]

At the end of his speech, Chaudhri Ghulam Abbas appealed that the resolution be adopted unanimously and stated that if there was difference of opinion, it should be expressed with full freedom but after the passage of the resolution, the dissenters should bow their heads or else take their own path.

Opening his speech with the following verse:

بقدر شوق نہیں ظرف تنگ نائے غزل
کچھ اور چاہیئے وسعت میرے بیان کیلئے

Mr. A.R. Saghar said:—

"In so far as reasons to support the renaming of the Party are concerned, Maulvi Mohammad Saeed and Chaudhri Ghulam Abbas have stated them in detail. This proposal has been examined (by some preceding speakers) in the light of what they thought to be the principles of Islamic Shariat. It is forgotten that in our day-to-day life, we come across situations, wherein we do not deal only with the Muslims. To drag religion into political matters and that too, to such an extent as to make it the hangman's rope, is not a correct approach because by so doing, we only make controversial a very sacred thing (the religion). We should not use religion in a manner that it creates difficulties in our day-to-day life. If we do not change our place, we shall not be able to achieve our objectives. The sphere of politics has so tremendously increased now that we can no longer confine ourselves to the sphere which we had selected for ourselves eight years ago. India or Kashmir of today cannot move ahead without accepting Nationalism. Nationalism is the best way of doing full justice to the minorities and we shall not only be defending our Islamic heritage but shall also be defending the rights of non-Muslims."[2]

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1 & 2 Al-Islah, 16th June, 1939.

Speaking in favour of the resolution, Mirza Mohammad Afzal Beg said:

"The Muslims of Kashmir should learn a lesson from what happened in Rajkot. Despite the fact that Gandhiji and other important forces from British-India were supporting the Hindu majority, they were frustrated by the small minority consistng of Muslims and Harijans. However insignificant the minority, no majority can succeed without their co-operation. It has been claimed that we (Muslims) shall alone render sacrifices and achieve our rights and that the minorities will also benefit from the same but self-respecting leaders like Budh Singh and others do not want these rights as a charity; they want to contribute their bit in shaping the future and offer sacrifices to achieve their rights. Religion should not be brought to bear on political and economic matters. *Chaudhry Hameedullah has referred to the role of Hindu money-lenders but I can name Muslim members of the Assembly who opposed laws that were brought to benefit the peasants. Similarly, I can name Muslim members of the Assembly who opposed the resolution for giving Muslims due representation in Services.* This at least shows that all Muslims do not share the same view-point regarding economic matters and that the real division among the masses is economic and not religious. When the Muslims of Kashmir went through the hell of sacrifices earlier, there were Muslims who opposed them and similarly there will be Muslims who will oppose them even now. Sardar Budh Singh who resigned his membership of the Assembly as a protest against the grazing-tax, can be preferred to such Muslims as a political ally. All Hindus and all Muslims will never come together but those who fight the battle of freedom will ultimately succeed."[1]

Addressing the meeting, Pandit Prem Nath Bazaz said:—

"I have never been so happy as I am today; it is so overwhelming that it is not possible for me to express myself coherently and with ease. From the very beginning, it has been my longing to bring all the communities on a common platform. Whenever I expressed these views to my friends, they used to laugh at me but Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah used to say that unity will be achieved, though, progressively and slowly. The Pandits used to say that they had expelled me from their community and that is why I talked of things which were detrimental to them while the Muslims used to say that in reality, Bazaz was a C.I.D. planted by the Kashmiri Pandits who wants to damage Muslim interests but God alone knew the secret of my heart" :

مگر میرے دل کا بھید خدا ھی جانتا ہے -

1 Al-Islah, 16th June, 1939.

The 1931 revolution was not a communal disturbance; it should be called a national revolt because it broke the chains of slavery though afterwards some people gave it a communal direction to fulfil their selfish interests."[1]

The resolution was strenuously opposed by Chaudhri Hameedullah Khan, Maulvi Rafi-ud-Din, Mr. Ghulam Haider Gori, Maulvi Mohammad Abdullah, Advocate, Sheikh Ahmed Din Banihali and Khawaja Ghulam Ahmad Ganai of Bhadarwah. Opposing the resolution, Chaudhri Hameedullah Khan said:—

"Whatever has been gained by Muslims so far, has been due to the efforts of the Muslim Conference. National Conference will not be able to work for Muslims; Muslims are at present backward and less organised than others; therefore, by changing Muslim Conference into National Conference, other people will take undue advantage from the backwardness of Muslims.

The politics of Kashmiri Pandits is confined to Services alone; it is, therefore, futile to expect co-operation from them. Those who are joining our ranks do not command the confidence of their community; it is no wisdom to give them all things that our house possesses.

There can be no unity between the weak and the strong. They cannot march together. In Jammu we have Hindu money-lenders while Muslims constitute the poor peasantry. Unity among them is impossible. Rajputs pride themselves to be rulers; they do not therefore, feel any need for unity; that is why no other nation is coming forward even by an inch. How then are you going ahead by changing your own Organisation"?[2]

According to Pandit Prem Nath Bazaz, when the resolution was put to vote, out of a total of 176 delegates, only three voted against. According to Rashid Taseer, Sheikh Ahmad Din Banihali, Maulvi Mohammad Abdullah, Advocate and Khawaja Ghulam Ahmad Ganai from Bhadarwah (W. C. members), walked out in protest.

This happened on 10th June 1939. Non-Muslims, therefore, attended the special session on 11th June. Addressing the session, Pandit Jia Lal Killam said:—

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1 & 2 Weekly Islah, 16th June, 1939.

"We can seek assistance from any outside organisation which is prepared to do so without any strings but if we will not take any assistance from anyone, it is the Muslim League or the Hindu Mahasabha because while the former demands the partition of the motherland, the latter seeks to establish Hindu Raj. However, if parties like Ahrars or Jamiat-ul-Ulema wish to help us, we shall accept it."[1]

We have already seen that the name proposed to be given to the Party at the Jammu session only a year ago was the All Jammu and Kashmir Political Conference. That too could have served the purpose because, after all, the proposed name was, in the Congress terminology, non-communal. What then was the necessity of dragging in the word 'national'?

In April, 1939, a sub-committee with Khawaja Ghulam Mohammad Sadiq as Chairman and Maulvi Mohammad Saeed and Bakhshi Ghulam Mohammad as members, had been set up to suggest amendments in the Party Constitution so as to bring it in conformity with its new name. Pandit Jia Lal Killam, Mian Ahmad Yar Khan and Pandit Janki Nath Sapru were also consulted. The amended constitution was adopted on 10th June, 1939, after a five hour debate. Mr. Ghulam Haider Gori vainly opposed the insertion of the word 'National'. The President was authorised to nominate non-Muslims to the General Council and the Working Committee.[2]

CH. GHULAM ABBAS EXPLAINS HIS POSITION

Records, that have survived the ravages of time on this side of the Cease-fire line, show that although Chaudhri Ghulam Abbas Khan was not basically opposed to the change, as such, he was, in fairness to him, quite apprehensive that the Hindu elements may impulsively drag the new party into the fold of the Congress without being able to attract support from their communities. He expressed his fears to his colleagues and this is what Pandit Prem Nath Bazaz has said as to what happened:—

"Some of the delegates including Abbas privately expressed fears about the future of the political Movement after the change was effected. They were not sure that the State Hindus would sincerely and whole heartedly support the freedom struggle. A meeting was held in which Abdullah, Abbas and Bazaz discussed these doubts and fears. It was obvious that the large majority of the State Hindus would prefer Dogra rule to a democratic Government, but that the reorientation would immensely strengthen the forces of freedom and

1 *Ibid.*
2 Taseer, p. 386.

enable Hindu and Sikh progressives and patriots to participate in the struggle was also clear. Muslim leaders feared that the National Conference would become a hand-maid of the Indian Congress. But Abdullah, Abbas and Bazaz solemnly declared that it would be most harmful and dangerous to bring the Kashmir Freedom Movement under the influence of any outside organisation. It was decided that the organisation should keep aloof from the Indian National Congress as well as the Muslim League. On these assurances, misgivings of Abbas were allayed and he gave his fullest support to the resolution in the plenary session of the Conference."[1]

Chaudhri Ghulam Abbas Khan has given the following version of the events:—

"In course of negotiations with Abdullah party, Sheikh Abdullah and Pandit Bazaz were questioned as to whether the religious, political and administrative grievances of Muslims against the Kashmir Government which included cow slaughter, restrictions on change of religion, encouragement of Hindus, unjust treatment in the matter of Services etc. could be treated by Pandit Jawahar Lal as reasonable and worthy of attention. In this connection I said just by the way that even nationalists like Pandit Jawahar Lal were in fact against Muslims and it was impossible that he would support the above grievances. Upon this it was agreed that Pandit Ji's opinion on all these matters be obtained through correspondence.

Pandit Ji's reply was fully according to my expectations and desire. He strongly condemned Kashmir Government's repressive and discriminatory laws against Muslims and also supported their grievances. (It seems there is a misprint. What Chaudhri Sahib probably wanted to say was that Pandit Ji's reply was against his expectations and wishes).

After mutual political discussions and internal parleys, it was decided that a special session of the Muslim Conference be convened at Srinagar for taking a decision about the setting up of the National Conference. Consequently the following conditions were settled for the formation of the National Conference:—

1. It will be in the objectives of the National Conference to struggle for the religious, economic, political and administrative grievances (of Muslims).

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1 Struggle for Freedom, p. 170.

2. Separate electorate, which was already in force with regard to elections to the Assembly and other bodies, shall remain in force.

3. Sheikh Abdullah will not own Congress politics nor will he support the Congress in any case.

4. In the struggle against Maharaja Hari Singh, all the nations inhabiting the State, shall have an opportunity of participation and the goal of the Conference would be to set up a Responsible Government.

These conditions were moved on my behalf in the open session and accepted by the opposite party. It was also announced on our behalf that we were joining the National Conference under an agreement and that we shall take a final decision only after watching the attitude of the standard-bearers of nationalism. Consequently it was after every possible precaution that we joined the National Conference. Hindu press unanimously opposed the formation of the National Conference because in their view the above conditions had turned it practically into a communal organisation."[1]

Chaudhri Ghulam Abbas has then proceeded to detail the circumstances that influenced his decision to support the formation of the National Conference. They are as follows:—

"Sheikh Abdullah was now out of our hands and had adopted Nehru as his Guru and probably also as his spiritual leader. In view of the political situation obtaining at the time and the policy pursued by the Maharaja and his Government with regard to Muslims, it was considered by us suicidal to cause disruption in Muslim ranks.

2. All prominent workers were agreed that Muslims of the State should not have two organisations.

3. *Every one at the time thought, according to his own lights, that Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah may not conspire to finish Muslims.*

4. In view of the 80% majority of Muslims, the participation of non-Muslims could not affect their separate identity.

5. The conditions under which the National Conference was being brought into being, were totally communalistic.

1 Autobiography, p. 211 & 212.

6. The nationalist idea had not been accepted. What was stressed was that, according to Muslim point of view, merging of Hindus and Muslims was impossible; that unity of action between them was possible only on the basis of a political agreement. The Conference had merely decided to allow Hindus to join their ranks.

7. We also wanted to build an excuse with Hindus and Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah."

"My personel weakness also contributed to the situation. The last eight years' extreme and continuous political struggle which also included every sort of physical, spiritual and monetary worries, had so broken my courage that I was not alone in a position to run an independent organisation.

Hazrat-e-Quaid-e-Azam visited Srinagar in 1935(6). I was the President and Sheikh Abdullah and myself were still together. I presented an address of welcome on behalf of the Muslim Conference, in reply to which Hazrat-e-Quaid-i-Azam said that as Muslims are in an overwhelming majority in the State, it is the duty of their leaders that they should not only win over the hearts of non-Muslims but also carry them along like a wheel of the political vehicle."[1]

Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah's version is not before us as yet because the autobiography he is writing has not been published so far. Chaudhri Ghulam Abbas published his book in 1950 when he was Supreme Head of the Azad Government and when hatred against Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, especially on this side of the Cease-fire line, was at its height. I had the occasion to discuss certain aspects of the book with Chaudhri Sahib and I must record it in fairness to everybody including the departed leader, that he regretted its publication. The publishers of the book have added a note of their own in the very beginning of the book which is reproduced below:—

"When this book had completed the printing and binding stages, the learned author felt the necessity of additions and alterations but as our patrons were insisting upon an early publication, we are extremely sorry that we have not been able to comply with the wishes of the author."

What parts the learned author wanted to eliminate and what he wanted to add instead, shall never be known now, but one wished that the publi-

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1 Autobiography, p. 213.

shers had not cared so much for the financial loss involved and had instead complied with his wishes. Unfortunately, the conditions which have been mentioned by Chaudhri Ghulam Abbas Khan could not be traced in any record of the proceedings available on this side of the Cease-fire line. However, it appears that the necessity of explaining to a Pakistan readership his support for the change pushed him, unreasonably and uncharitably, too far. Real greatness essentially lies in frankly acknowledging rather than trying to explain away a mistake. Afterall, it is human to err.

THE NATIONAL DEMANDS

The Working Committee having authorised the co-option of non-Muslim members, Sardar Budh Singh, Pandit Jia Lal Killam, Lala Girdhari Lal Dogra, Pandit Kayshup Bandhu and Pandit Prem Nath Bazaz were nominated to the Committee. The first session of the newly formed National Conference was held at Anantnag from September 30th to October 2nd, 1939. Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah was elected President. It was also attended by Chaudhri Ghulam Abbas Khan and Chaudhri Hameedullah Khan. The Conference adopted a resolution embodying the National Demands proclamation issued earlier on 29th August, 1938, which said:—

"(*a*) The present system of administration shall be replaced by Responsible Government subject to the general control and residuary powers of His Highness the Maharaja Bahadur as hereinafter mentioned.

(*b*) The Ministry shall be responsible to the Legislature and shall have, subject to such responsibility, power to control the expenditure of the revenues and also to make such grants and appropriations on any part of those revenues or of any other property except the following which shall remain under the control of His Highness the Maharaja Bahadur:—

1. Expenditure on the Military Service.
2. Expenditure classed as Political and Foreign.
3. Payments of all debts and liabilities hitherto lawfully contracted and incurred by His Highness in Council.
4. The Darmarth Trust.

(c) The Principle of Responsibility to the Legislature shall be introduced in all branches of administration subject to general control, reservations and residuary powers vested in His Highness in respect of control of Military, Foreign and Political affairs, etc., provided that the proposal of His Highness for appropriation of any revenues or moneys for Military or other expenditure for Foreign and Political purposes shall be submitted to the vote of the legislature, but that His Highness shall have power, notwithstanding the vote of the Assembly, to appropriate upto a fixed maximum any sum he may consider necessary for such expenditure.

(d) The Legislature shall consist entirely of members elected by constituencies, founded on the system of adult franchise. Provision should be made for the representation of labour, trade, landlords, and educational interests by means of election.

(e) The election to the Legislature shall be made on the basis of joint electorates; seats should be reserved for the minorities, and all safeguards and weightages should be guaranteed to them in the Constitution for the protection of their linguistic, religious, cultural, political and economic rights according to the principles enunciated, accepted or acted upon by the Indian National Congress from time to time. In addition to the above, the religious rights and sentiments of all the communities should always be respected and not interfered with.

(f) All the subjects of the State, without distinction of creed or caste, shall be admitted for service in all Services of Defence, and for that purpose His Highness shall be assisted by a Minister responsible to the Assembly.

(g) No subject of His Highness shall be liable to suffer in liberty, life, property or of association, of speech or in respect of writing except under sentence by an ordinary Court of Justice and as a result of lawful and open trial."[1]

It was in this session that the National Conference adopted its new flag which consists of a red cloth with the sign of a white plough inscribed in its centre. By another resolution the Conference appreciated the intention underlying the statement issued by the Working Committee of the Indian National Congress about the War and the British policy towards the political aspirations of the Indian people.

NEHRU'S FAILURE TO PUSH HINDUS INTO NATIONAL CONFERENCE

Immediately after the formation of the National Conference, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah set up a religious body named as "the Auqaf Commi-

1 Inside Kashmir, p. 316.

ttee" to administer the uniquely prestigious shrine at Hazratbal and look after other Muslim Waqf properties. Another function of the Committee was to arrange the anniversary celebrations of the Holy Prophet's (Peace be upon him) birth. This was not liked by the Hindus. Private criticism ultimately became public and generated mutual bitterness. Says Pandit Bazaz:

> "Mr. Abdullah is a devout Mussalman and believes that much of his success has been due to the fact that he has been a true follower of Islam."[1]

Celebration of Eid-e-Milad-u-Nabi had been a regular feature of Muslim Conference activities over the past years. In 1940 when it was observed on 24th April, it was the first anniversary after the formation of the National Conference and as the general mass of Muslims was not happy with the change and thought that Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah was moving away from their interests and coming, more and more, under Hindu influence as represented by Nehru, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah utilised the occasion as an opportunity to belie this growing popular belief and demonstrate his continued devotion to Islam and commitment to Muslim interests. As usual he took great pains in making the celebrations a great success.

During the two weeks preceding the main observance, meetings were held in different parts of Srinagar, which were addressed by Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, Maulana Masudi and Bakhshi Ghulam Mohammad. The theme of the meetings, apart from religious sermons, was the need for Muslim uuity.

لو وہ بھی کہتے ہیں کہ یہ بے ننگ و نام ہے
یہ جانتا تو آگ لگاتا نہ گھر کو میں

A psychologist can analyse better but it seems that it was because of the background, detailed above, heavily weighing upon his mind that in course of a speech, while drawing a comparison of different religions, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah described Islam as Sun and other religions as Stars.[2] The Hindus were quick to forget the political compulsions in the background and hastened to interpret it as the ultimate victory of Islam over Hinduism on the ground that the appearance of the Sun heralded the disappearance of the stars. The so-called Hindu nationalists have considered nationalism as being something incompatible with a

1 Inside Kashmir, p. 347.
2 *Ibid*, p. 325.

Muslim nationalist's devotion to his religion. To them a good Muslim nationalist is one who may not practise his religion. A storm of protest was therefore raised. He was condemned as a "rank communalist". His 'nationalism' was ridiculed and condemned as a fraud. It was said that in the garb of nationalism, he still wanted to establish 'Muslim Raj'. The campaign was spear-headed by "Martand". However, Sheikh Abdullah remained unmoved. When the Working Committee met on 28th April, 1940, in connection with the impending visit of Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru, some Hindu members took exception to the above remarks and sought an explanation. Sheikh Abdullah was deeply angered and replied by saying that he was a "Muslim first and Muslim last".[1]

It was Pandit Nehru's second visit, the first having taken place more than twenty years ago. He was to be the guest of the National Conference. A Reception Committee was set up with Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah as Chairman. On 30th April, Pandit Jia Lal Killam and Pandit Kayshup Bandhu resigned from the Party. According to Pandit Prem Nath Bazaz:—

> "Though there is no doubt that they acted hastily, it is unfair to judge them by the isolated action. They were forced to take this step by the oppressive communal atmosphere which was daily increasing inside the circles of the Conference."[2]

Accompanied by Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, Pandit Nehru arrived in Srinagar on 30th May, 1940. He toured Kashmir for ten days and advised Hindus to join the National Conference and strengthen the hands of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah. The National Conference, aided this time by Hindu money and resources, took out a pompous river procession in his honour, which was, however, marred by noisy demonstrations staged by hostile Muslim groups owing allegiance to Mir Waiz Maulana Yusuf Shah at Ghat Malik Sahib, Ghat Chhatabal, Ghat Hafiz Sahib, Nawankadal, Bulbul Lankar, Aalikadal, Ghat Sheikh Moosa and Masjid-e-Badshah. The demonstrators raised the slogans of "Go Back Nehru", "Muslim League Zindabad" and "Quaid-e-Azam Zindabad". Beyond Fateh Kadal, there was no hostile demonstration but at Amira Kadal some people raised pro-Muslim League slogans and it was here that Pandit Nehru had a narrow escape, as a ceremonial gate crashed down just a few seconds after he had crossed it.[3] On 31st May, he addressed a public meeting in Hazoori Bagh; Sheikh Abdullah presented an address of welcome. Given below is the English translation of a hand-bill issued by the Muslim League Srinagar and circulated in the city in large numbers:—

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1 Inside Kashmir, p. 327.
2 *Ibid*, p. 327.
3 Weekly Al-Islah, p

"WILL PANDIT NEHRU EXPLAIN"

1. In course of a speech at the All India States People Conference at Ludhiana in 1939, you said that you were a Kashmiri and that your sympathies were with Kashmir. But where were you and where were your sympathies when in 1931 the Muslims, who are in an overwhelming majority, were compelled to start a movement for political reforms?

2. From 1931 to 1938, the Muslims of the State launched many a movement for securing their legitimate rights. Where were your sympathies during all this period?

3. Your Congress colleagues had, in their speeches as well as writings, condemned the participants of the freedom struggle of 1931 as goondas and miscreants. Why didn't you then express your sympathy with the Movement and how is it that now you have come here as a guest of these very alleged goondas and mischief-mongers and are pretending to support them?

4. Is it correct that many a leading Congressites had opposed the separation of Sind from Bombay Presidency and the introduction of reforms in N.W.F.P. and it was the All India Muslim League which supported the legitimate demands of the Muslims of Sind and N.W.F.P.? If it is correct, then how is it that your heart, now, goes out in sympathy for the Pathans of N.W.F.P.?

5. Is it not a fact that both you and Gandhiji have of late been going to the Frontier to create a false sense of confidence in the minds of the Pathans and thus damage the larger interests of the Mulims of India and establish Hindu Raj in the sub-continent?

6. Is it not a fact that you have come to Kashmir simply because the All India Muslim League has recently come forward with a constructive programme for Muslims and you want to get it opposed by Muslims of the majority provinces?

7. When Hindus of Hyderabad started an agitation in the name of religious freedom, both you and Gandhiji supported them in various ways but although Muslims of Kashmir suffer from many limitations on their religious freedom such as the prohibition on the change of religion and the award of ten years imprisonment for cow-slaughter, are you ready to help them in getting these monstrous laws removed and if Muslims start a movement in this connection, would your sympathies be with them?"[1]

1 Al-Islah, 6th June, 1940.

A copy of the hand-bill was handed over to Pandit Nehru. It was published under the signatures of Mr. A.U.Wafa, Propaganda Secretary of the Muslim League, Srinagar. Nehru, however, chose to remain silent and did not answer these questions in any of the many meetings he addressed.

Nehru's decision to visit Srinagar was entirely his own. He had no formal invitation from Sh. Abdullah or his party. There can be no doubt that he must have been fully posted with the political situation. He must have been, therefore, aware that although Sh. Abdullah had abandoned the mainstream of Muslim political thinking, he had, all the same, failed to win the support of the Hindu minority. He seems to have, therefore, decided upon the visit, partly to pat Sh. Abdullah for his new creed in order to sustain his nationalism which had, at the very start, showed its impracticability in a Hindu-ruled State and partly to win Non-Muslim support for his party in the better and wider interests of Hindu India. He did not succeed in pushing non-Muslims into the Party but his private counsel did succeed in reducing the frequency and volume of their vituperative attacks. A long meeting with Pandit Shiv Narain Fotedar also failed to bring about the desired change. Pandit Nehru visited Jammu on 11th June, 1940, for an over-night stay. He was accompanied by Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan and Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah.

The expectation of Muslims that Hindus would dissolve their communal parties under advice from Pandit Nehru and join the National Conference to make a common cause for the establishment of responsible Government did not come true. This affected very adversely the standing of the National Conference in the eyes of Muslims and even caused deep frustration to Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah and his colleagues. Sometime later Pandit Kayshup Bandhu, in course of a statement, explaining his resignation from the National Conference, made the following disclosure:—

> "I told Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah that he had no right to compare other religions with Islam on the public platform, compare Islam with Sun and other religions with stars. Upon this he replied that I must remember that he was a Muslim first and a Muslim last; I, therefore, brought this to the notice of the members of the Working Committee who were present in the meeting. Pandit Jia Lal Killam then told Sheikh Abdullah that he should not say like that but could say that he was a Muslim as well as a Nationalist. To this Sheikh Abdullah replied that this was not his faith. Pandit Killam then asked him as to why then was he a nationalist? To this Sheikh Abdullah replied that he was a Nationalist because the Quran tells him to be a Nationalist. Upon this I said, "Sheikh Sahib, if some day you come to know that the Quran tells you not to be a Nationalist, what will you do?"

Sheikh Abdullah replied, "I curse such nationalism which is not permitted by the Holy Quran."[1]

The Martyrs' Day came close on the heels of Pandit Nehru's return. In keeping with the traditions of the Party, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah began preparations for its observance by the National Conference. The move was strongly opposed by his Hindu colleagues as in their opinion, it was an anti-Hindu movement with which they had nothing to do except that it was directed against them. Therefore, they refused to associate themselves with the programme. Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah naturally and correctly brushed aside their opposition and proceeded with the observance of the Day with all the seriousness and solemnity that has ever marked its observance by Muslims.

The National Conference held its annual session in Baramula on 27th, 28th and 29th September, 1940, under the presidentship of Sardar Budh Singh. Less than five feet high, Budh Singh was known as a Mahatma for his passionate devotion to the cause of the poor. Having joined the State service at an early age, he held the important post of Wazir-e-Wazarat at the time of resignation. He withdrew into forests and spent many a year in meditation. This writer has heard him tell a public meeting in Baramula that Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah was the reward of his prayers. Having joined the National Conference at the time of its formation, he remained attached to it ever after. While on a visit to Baramula, a few years before partition, this writer accompanied him to a quarry outside the town where some labourers were taking out stones by dynamiting rocks. When told that they had to pay a substantial part of their earnings as tax, Budh Singh was really in tears. After partition he became a member of the Indian Parliament. The non-Muslims never listened to him seriously nor acted on his advice. A kind and pious man himself, he was, however, unable to influence either the thinking or the actions of Sikhs, to say the least, of Hindus.

The number of delegates was not very large and public attendance was thin due to heavy rains. On the 2nd day, the open session had, therefore, to be shifted to the Jamia Masjid while the delegates' meetings were held at the residence of Mr. Saif-ud-Din Shah, a member of the State Assembly from Sopore but a resident of Baramula. The Conference adopted many resolutions; one, moved by Pandit Prem Nath Bazaz, demanded grant of proprietary rights to tillers of the land. In another resolution, moved by Mirza Afzal Beg, the Conference demanded replacement of land revenue by a sort of income-tax or, in the alternative, to assess land revenue on the same scale as was used in the levying of income tax. It was a

1. Al-Islah, 1st August 1940.

demand that has not been put into practice even in the year 1976 by India. Khawaja Ghulam Mohammad Sadiq moved a resolution demanding the setting up of a separate department to look after the welfare of labourers, who migrated to the plains during winter for seasonal employment.

By 1941, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah's disillusionment with the Nationalist creed had further increased. He seems to have begun to realise that by converting the Muslim Conference into National Conierence, he had, without attracting any substantial support from the non-Muslims, even lost the ground he so solidly held among Muslims. Addressing a public meeting in Srinagar on 28th July, 1941, he asked, "in a country like Kashmir where Kashmiri Pandits cannot even tolerate the construction of a bath room by Muslims on the banks of Jhelum, what is the use of preaching Nationalism? People who cannot even tolerate the washing of hands and face by us on the banks of Jhelum, surely, cannot be united with us".

The next annual session of the National Conference was held in Srinagar on 22nd, 23rd and 24th August, 1941. Sardar Budh Singh was re-elected President. It was also attended by the Frontier Gandhi. This he may have done on advice from the Congress High Command so as to build up a personal friendship between him and the Kashmir Gandhi in order to use it for the furtherance of Congress goals in the State. In the procession which is traditionally taken out in connection with the annual session of political parties all over the sub-continent, slogans of Nara-e-Takbir and Islam Zindabad were raised frequently which at least showed what Muslim masses thought of nationalism. Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah performed the flag hoisting ceremony. The main resolution reiterated the demand for the grant of responsible Government. A special feature of the session was a grand Mushaira presided over by Sir Abdul Qadir. Hafeez Jullundhuri recited a poem.

In a meeting of the Working Committee held in Jammu towards the end of January, 1942, it was decided to launch a campaign for the relief of the poor who were badly hit by the rising cost of living. It was also decided to set up a volunteer corps with Bakhshi Ghulam Muhammad as Commander and Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah as Salar-e-Azam. After the meeting, Sheikh Abdullah left for India to meet Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru. No annual session was held in 1942, largely because of the situation brought about by the "Quit India Movement" launched by the Indian National Congress in August, 1942. The Working Committee again met in Srinagar on the 16th, 17th and 18th of May, 1942.

It decided to open a training camp for political workers lasting over two weeks. It also decided to extend full support in war efforts. This decision ran counter to the Congress policy. A press conference was, therefore, held on 22nd May 1942, which was addressed mainly by Khawaja Ghulam Mohammad Sadiq who explained why they had changed their policy with regard to the War. He said that because of the entry of Russia, it was no longer a war between the Imperialists but had become a Peoples' war. It may be recalled that this was the line adopted by the Communist Party of India to justify its overnight shift in the matter.

CHAPTER INDEX

REVIVAL OF MUSLIM CONFERENCE

CHAPTER XIV

Revival of Muslim Conference

THE BEGINNERS

The transformation of the Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference into the National Conference was not well-received by Muslim masses. They had lived as a nation, distinct from the Hindus, throughout the centuries of their history. They had never inter-married; they had never even shared each other's food; their dress, their culture and their customs were all diametrically opposed to one another; so much so that while the Mussalman tied his turban from right to the left, a Hindu tied it from left to right; the Muslims rode the horse from its right side but the Hindu did it from the left side; even the ornaments worn by women, to say the least of their dress, were entirely different. From the very start of the non-Muslim occupation, beginning with 1819, the Hindus had wholly identified themselves with the Government and shared in its glories as well as misfortunes while the case with the Muslims was entirely different. It was the Hindu who oppressed them as a soldier; it was the Hindu who oppressed them as an administrator and again it was the Hindu who, as money-lender, sucked the very blood out of them; it was the Hindu neighbour who acted as a Government spy and on whose whims and pleasure, depended the security and honour of his Muslim neighbours. How could under these circumstances the gospel of nationalism, that was now being preached from the political pulpits, carry conviction? True, that Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah was supremely popular in large parts of the State but how long could his personal estimation with the people throw dust into their eyes and stop them from coming face to face with the hard realities of the situation?

A large number of delegates to the special session which renamed the Party, were opposed to the change but unfortunately they were like a

shepherdless flock of sheep because none of the important leaders such as Chaudhri Ghulam Abbas Khan, Mirza Mohammad Afzal Beg, Khawaja Ghulam Mohammad Sadiq, Bakhshi Ghulam Mohammad, Maulana Masudi or A.R. Saghar came forward to give them the necessary lead while, on the other hand, their unanimous advocacy of the nationalist creed caused great demoralisation.

Workers from Islamabad who had bycotted the special session met immediately afterwards and resolved to continue their work under the name of the Muslim Conference but as the most important political leader from the district, Mirza Mohammad Afzal Beg, was in the National Conference, they were not able to make any real headway. Similarly, in Srinagar a group of young workers under the leadership of Qureshi Mohammad Yusuf dissociated themselves from the National Conference and decided to preserve the Muslim Conference. On 15th September, they organised a big procession which paraded various localities of the city and eventually, though unsuccessfully, tried to capture the Mujahid Manzil, the new headquarters of the National Conference built on Muslim Waqf land with funds solely contributed by Muslims. Bakhshi Ghulam Mohammad came with a large band of volunteers with the result that some workers of the Muslim Conference including Qureshi Mohammad Yusuf were severely beaten. Mr. Nazir Ahmed Shah, the Magistrate on duty and several policemen were also injured. The building was damaged as a result of mutual brick-batting. In the evening the National Conference held a public meeting at Pathar Masjid which was addressed by Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, Bakhshi Ghulam Mohammad and Pandit Jia Lal Killam. The people were publicly advised to maintain calm but after the meeting ended, a large crowd formed into a procession and paraded parts of the city raising slogans against the opponents of the National Conference.

In Jammu the news of the renaming of the party was received with mixed feelings. Vast sections of Muslims were opposed to the change. The campaign against the adoption of Nationalism was gallantly spearheaded by Professor Mohammad Ishaque Qureshi, one of our leading intellectuals who was later distired to play an important role in the freedom struggle. A few weeks later, a public meeting was convened by a local group in the name of the Muslim League. Maulana Ghulam Haider presided while Professor Inayatullah of the Punjab Muslim League, Professor Ishaque, and Maulvi Rafiuddin were the principal speakers. The meeting which was pronouncedly convened to pass a resolution of no-confidence against Chaudhri Ghulam Abbas Khan, was disrupted by his supporters. A few weeks later, another attempt to maintain the separate entity of Muslims was made, again in Srinagar, by Khawaja Ghulam Mohiud-Din,

Editor Weekly 'Rehbar', Khawaja A.U. Raina, Khawaja M. G. Haleem, Mr. M.I. Saghar, Khawaja Abdus Salam Dalal and Syed Mubarak Shahin who formed a new party under the name of Muslim League. Mir Abdul Aziz, who had recently returned from Aligarh, after passing his M.A., LL. B., was elected President. On 23rd March, 1940, a public meeting was held at Badamwari Mohallah, Srinagar under the presidentship of Mr. Ghulam Rasul Azad. A resolution was passed calling upon political workers, who had dissociated themselves from the National Conference, to revive the Muslim Conference.

Professor Ishaque from Jammu and Professor Aziz from Srinagar attended the historic Lahore session of the All India Muslim League which passed the Pakistan Resolution. Prof. Aziz was nominated a W.C. member of the All India States Muslim League. On 6th October, 1940, a deputation of the All India Muslim Educational Conference comprising Khan Bahadur Azizul-Haq, Speaker, Bengal Legislative Assembly, and Vice Chancellor of the Calcutta University, Mr. Ali Afzal, Secretary Bengal Legislative Assembly, Haji Abdul Hassan, a former Director of Education, Kashmir Government and Doctor Khalifa Shuja-ud-Din, Bar-at-Law, Lahore arrived in Srinagar to investigate the state of Muslim education and take up the issue with the State Government. They were met by a large number of local Muslims, especially the educated youth who, apart from an exchange of views, thanked them for the continued interest of Muslim India in their well-being.

In June 1940 a weekly newspaper, "Paigham" owned by *late* Mr. Yusuf Qureshi and edited by Mr. Nizam-ud-Din, started publication from Srinagar and campaigned for the revival of Muslim Conference. Yet another Weekly, Al-Islah, owned by the Ahmedis, also launched a campaign condemning the formation of the National Conference and for revival of the Muslim Conference.

Eventually, on 10th October, 1940, 12 political workers met in Srinagar and decided to revive the Muslim Conference. They said in a statement:—

> "It is not our intention to enter, at present, into a public debate about the merits and demerits of the formation of the National Conference; nor do we desire to say, at this stage, as to what consequences have flowed from it and how it has damaged the larger interests of Muslims; however, we have arrived at the conclusion th the purpose for which the so-called nationalist elements among Hindus desired the formation of the National Conference w

kill two birds with one stone; they were not able to do so by themselves and, therefore, resorted to the help and co-operation of Muslim leaders.

An important session of the Muslim Conference is being convened very soon and all sympathisers and well-wishers will be invited for participation so that by joining our heads, we may be able to evolve an agreed programme."

The signatories were: (1) Sardar Gauhar Rahman, Jammu city; (2) Sardar Fateh Mohammad Khan, M.L.A. Poonch; (3) Mirza Attaullah Khan, M.L.A., Rajouri, (4) Qazi Abdul Ghani Delinah, M.L.A. Baramula, (5) Pir Zia-ud-Din, M.L.A. Badgam; (6) Babu Mohammad Abdullah, M.L.A. Jammu; (7) Chaudhri Abdul Karim, M.L.A. Mirpur; (8) Chaudhri Hameedullah Khan, M.L.A. Jammu; (9) Munshi Mohammad Din Fauq, Baramula; (10) Syed Hassan Shah Jalali, Srinagar; (11) Khawaja Mohammad Yusuf Qureshi, Srinagar, (12) Mr. M. I. Saghar, Srinagar, (13) Mr. Ghulam Haider Gauri, Editor, "Naujawan", Jammu and (14) Syed Mirak Shah, Srinagar.[1]

It was a courageous statement of far-reaching importance. At a time when the entire top leadership of the Muslim Conference had put its whole weight on the side of 'nationalism' and none of them had the courage of conviction to come forward to provide Muslims with an alternate leadership, these fourteen leaders, some of whom belonged to the second rank of Party leadership while some were even farther below, displayed great courage and unusual initiative in challenging the top leadership of the National Conference to a public duel. The Muslims of Kashmir owe them a debt of gratitude.

While these developments were taking place inside the State, the political picture in the sub-continent was fast undergoing a change. Hitler had easily over-run a large part of Europe. With the declaration of war against Germany by the United Kingdom, the sub-continent was also thrown into the flames of war. This was done without any consultation with the leaders of the country. Meanwhile, the All India Muslim League, after having suffered a serious set-back in the 1937 elections, had, under the dynamic leadership of Quaid-e-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah, come to life. The Nawabs, the jagirdars and the title-holders, were there as before, but now, for the first time, it had begun to attract the masses. The assumption of power by the Indian 'National' Congress at the provincial level, had almost blinded its leadership to the realities of the situation; they not only ignored the Muslim point of view

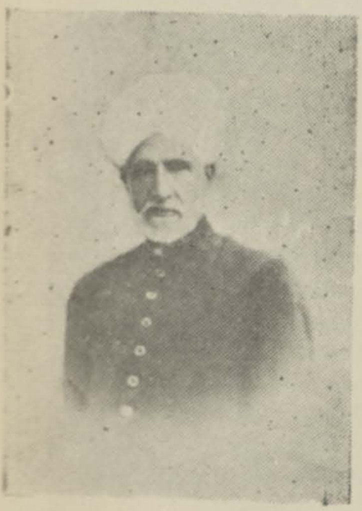
1. Al-Islah, 10th October, 1940.



Mistri Yaqub Ali



Maulvi Mohammad Abdullah Vakil



Munshi Shahab-ud-Din



Hussain Shah Jalali

in matters partaining to administration but also initiated policies at the provincial level which unmistakably exposed it as being inherently anti-Muslim. This also helped, in a way, in raising the popularity of the Muslim League. Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru tried his best to stop the growth of Muslim League by initiating what was termed as a mass contact campaign but despite the almost infinite resources at his disposal, it ended in a fiasco. At one time, he thought of the Congress ground to be so sure that in a public utterance at Calcutta he claimed that there were only two parties in the sub-continent, the British and the Congress. Instead of helping him, it clearly hurt the self-respect of Muslims who realised that the only way to save themselves from Hindu domination was by strengthening the All India Muslim League. When the Muslim League annual session was convened on the banks of Ravi on 23rd March, 1940, it was no longer the Muslim League of 1937 but had already become a strong force on the political map. It was in this session that the demand for the partition of India and the creation of a Muslim majority Sovereign State, which later came to be known as the "Pakistan Resolution", was passed amidst national jubilation.

These events and the clearly emerging division of Hindus and Muslims into two camps, the first trying to suppress and exterminate the other while the other desperately trying to preserve its entity, could not but have a deep, spontaneous and abiding impact on the political scene in the State. The National Conference had not been able to attract any sizable non-Muslims support. There is no doubt that about sixty Hindus and Sikhs courted arrest in 1938 but it seems that most of them did so with the deliberate aim of creating a more favourable and congenial atmosphere for putting an end to the extremely popular as well as powerful Muslim platform—the All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference, because by 1944, all that remained of the non-Muslim contribution, was a group of half a dozen top Hindu and Sikh leaders whose communities were completely opposed to the Party and continued to remain embraced with their own rabidly communal organisations such as the Yovak Sabha, the Dogra Sabha, the Akali Dal and the like. Muslims naturally could not fail to take due notice of this important fact and therefore voices began to be raised and questions began to be put to Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah and his colleagues as to what purpose had been served by destroying the powerful Muslim platform that had so successfully championed their Cause and brought them considerable relief. The National Conference leadership had no answer.

It was in this atmosphere that a parting of ways took place between Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah and Chaudhri Ghulam Abbas Khan. While the former chose to continue with the nationalist platform, the latter

decided to severe his connections with it and tendered his resignation sometime after Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru's visit which took place in May, 1940. According to Prem Nath Bazaz, "Chaudhri Sahib resigned without assigning any reasons". However, the reasons are not far to seek. They were working in different environments. Kashmir Muslims are essentially a hero-worshipping people with their own language; they do not have as much contact with Muslims in the Punjab as their co-religionists in Jammu. On the other hand, Jammu province has a long and easy border with the Punjab. Jammu and Sialkot, apart from close proximity, were linked by rail and road. Their mother-tongue is Punjabi and their culture is exactly the same; there have been inter-marriages since times of old. The result was that they were more apt to look towards Muslim Punjab for political lead; it was for this reason that the political climate in the Punjab had a direct, immediate and harmonious impact in Jammu province. The growing strength of the Muslim League in the Punjab and the demand for a separate Muslim homeland, therefore, frustrated efforts to win over Jammu Muslims towards nationalism. It must be said to the credit of the Muslims of Jammu that, en masse, they were the first in the State to frustrate the scheming of the Indian National Congress by adopting the Pakistan creed. It may also be noted that the 1931 Movement had resulted in the increased representation of Muslims in the Services. The exclusive Muslim platform provided them protection and support. It aired their grievances, fought for their promotions and operated as a standing pressure-group in their Cause. Reciprocally, especially in Jammu province, they financed its activities and guided the course of its day-to-day actions. It was quite natural, under these circumstances, that they should have been fiercely opposed to the change. As the majority of the gazetted officers was Punjabi-speaking, it was only natural that opposition to the change was stronger and deeper in Jammu than on this side of Banihal. That is why even when Ch. Ghulam Abbas Khan and Mr. Saghar were in the National Conference, it made no particular impact in this province and was largely ignored. It was under these circumstances that, in 1942, after remaining inactive politically for about two years, Chaudhri Ghulam Abbas Khan lent his public support to the revival of the Muslim Conference.

EFFORTS AT IMPOSING SANSKRIT SCRIPT

Persian was the State's official language for many centuries and Kashmiris, both Hindus and Muslims, were so conversant with it and spoke and wrote it so fluently that Allama Rashidi has traced as many as sixteen hundred and seventy-eight[1] Kashmiri poets of Persian language in his

1. IVth Volume, p. 4.

recently-published monumental work, Tazkira-e-Shoura-e-Kashmir. The importance of Persian language in the State may also be judged from the fact that only five hundred poets of Persian language have to-date been traced from the land of five rivers and even among them, a good number are of Kashmiri origin.

The Sikhs despite their extreme hatred against Muslims and all that they had stood for, did not, it may be said to their credit, effect any change in the State language. It was during the reign of Maharaja Ranbir Singh that the setting up of Patshalas was given unusual attention and large sums were spent on reviving Sanskrit learning. In 1898, Pratap Singh replaced Persian with Urdu as the official language. It was done at the instance and for the benefit of Punjabi Hindus who held some of the key jobs and who used the change as an effective means to import Urdu-knowing relations, friends and supporters from the Punjab. Kashmiri Muslims were not affected as their recruitment to the Services was and remained extremely restricted. The change, however, did adversely affect Kashmiri Pandits and it were they who raised their powerful voice against it. It was mainly because of their efforts that the Government was compelled, in a few years, to make hereditary State citizenship, an added qualification for entry into the Services. However, in so far as Muslims were concerned, it did not create any ill-will against the Government because Urdu and Persian have a common script—the Arabic script; its alphabet being the same as that of the Holy Book; the change, therefore, was neither deeply felt nor resented.

With the growth of Hindu nationalism in the sub-continent, fathered by such intense revivalists as Tilak, Bankim Chandra Chatterjee and the like, a militant movement for Hindu supremacy which had no place for any other community, except on its own terms, began to fire the imagination of the great majority of Indian Brahmins and the first to come under its spell were the educated and the feudal hierarchy among them.

Kashmir State had always a special appeal for Hindu India for the simple reason that it was a State with a Muslim majority but ruled by a Hindu Prince. There were, no doubt, hundreds among the 562 Indian States ruled by British-protected Hindu feudal dynasties but nowhere else did a Hindu prince rule a Muslim majority. It was, therefore, the first Hindu kingdom of its kind since Muslims over-ran the sub-continent more than nine hundred years ago. When Brahmins talked of freedom from the British, it meant, apart from the exit of the foreigners, the realisation of their deep longing to rule Muslims. That the same end stood already attained in Kashmir State, made it all the more dearer to their hearts.

With Ayyenger at the helm of affairs, the more militant among them decided upon a more drastic measure towards the cultural genocide of

Muslims by compelling them to learn Hindi. Yet another reason for its imposition was that Urdu being the State's official language, large sections of non-Muslims were not attracted by Sanskrit or Hindi. It seems that the elders of the community were afraid of the supposed consequences flowing from their coming generation being brought up under the influence of Urdu language.

The conspiracy to impose Hindi began to reveal itself quite suddenly. An advertisement was published in a newspaper inviting applications for the post of a clerk in the correspondence section of the Maharaja's office; it asked for applications from Hindi-knowing persons only. Nobody took serious notice but a few days later was issued a press-note announcing that the Government had named the State Council of Ministers as Amatia Mandal, President of the Assembly as Prumukh and the Assembly Members as Praja Sabha Sad. The announcement was naturally received with misgivings; it seemed wholly unnecessary. Political parties were not taken into confidence. The Assembly itself was not consulted; public opinion was not elicited. These facts together with the secrecy and suspicion surrounding the announcement were bound to excite Muslim public opinion. It was not unnatural that they should have interpreted it as the beginning of a sinister move to impose Hindi. Even otherwise, the very concept of Raja and Praja, as understood, was wholly misplaced and un-acceptable in the middle of the twentieth century. It was sheer obstinacy and bull-headedness to coin the term Praja Sabha (the Subjects Assembly) for an Assembly which included popularly-elected representatives.That these fears were not unfounded, was soon confirmed when letting the cat out of the bag, the Government appointed a Committee of the following experts in the field of Education, drawn both from inside as well as outside the State, to consider the question of the medium of instructions:

1. Khawaja Ghulam Saiyidain, Director Education, Chairman;
2. Doctor Zakir Hussain, Principal Jamia Millia, Delhi;
3. Mr. Tyndale Biscoe, Principal, C.M.S. High School, Srinagar;
4. Mr. Ram Chand Mehndiratta, Inspector of Schools, Jammu;
5. Qazi Mohammad Ishaque, Inspector of Schools, Kashmir;
6. Pandit Nand Lal Kunzru, Headmaster, S.P. High School, Srinagar, Secretary.

The Committee was of the opinion that introduction of two scripts

was highly undesirable as it would encourage separatist tendencies. It may be noted here that the proposal before the Committee was about the introduction of the Devanagri script in addition to the Persian script already in vogue. The Committee took the view that as Urdu was spoken and written throughout the State, any change was bound to result in unnecessary hardship both for the people as well as the Government. It, therefore, recommended that Persian script should continue to remain compulsory but, at the same time, Hindus or others desirous of learning Hindi may be given facilities to do so, beginning from the third primary. As the Government intended mischief and had an ulterior end in view, it did not accept the unanimous report of the Committee. The Education Minister Raja Mohammad Afzal Khan, who had supported the recommendations, was relieved of his post. On 21st October 1940, the Government instead issued Council Order No. 989/C which laid down that:—

1. The language should be a common one i.e. simple Urdu but it can be written in two scripts, namely, the Persian as well as the Devanagri script.

2. All text books should be written in the same language which was defined as simple Urdu but it should be published separately in both the scripts.

3. Students shall have the option to choose either of the scripts for their education.

4. Wherever the number of students desirous of having education in Devanagri script or otherwise is fifteen percent or above, it shall be necessary for the teacher of the subject concerned in the school to be acquainted with both the scripts.

5. Such teachers who are not acquainted with both the scripts will be given a period of one year to learn the other script.

6. In future, a person who is not acquainted with both the scripts, would not be recruited as a teacher.

7. The teachers already in service, but awaiting confirmation, were not to be confirmed until they learnt the other script.

It had grave implications. By this time the representation of Muslims in the Education department, on the level of teachers, had risen to about forty percent. Not one was acquainted with the Hindi script. The Council Order introduced an element of uncertainty and insecurity in relation to their future employment; it also made it impossible for any Muslim to be recruited as a teacher unless he had learnt the Hindi script.

No doubt fifteen percent Hindu majority did not exist in every school in Kashmir valley but Hindus being in control of the administrative wing of this sector, it was both easy as well as within the morals of at least most of them to adjust a vacancy against a school having fifteen percent or more Hindu students and this is what actually happened. Again, it created a psychological atmosphere about the growing importance of the Devanagri script which itself was sufficient to attract every community including the Muslims because the Government was the only employer as there were no industries worth the name.

The resentment of Muslims was very great, but to this I shall come a bit later. Here it may be stated that, according to Professor Wahid-ud-Din Saleem, Urdu language has drawn from different languages in the ratio shown against each: Hindi which includes words from Punjabi and Purbi: 21,644 words; words which came into being after a mixture of Hindi and other languages: 17,505 words; Arabic words: 7,584; Persian words: 66,041; English words: 500; Sanskrit words: 554; miscellaneous: 181 words. He has collected these figures from Farhang-e-Asfia, an authoritative work prepared in Hyderabad Deccan where considerable research was conducted in connection with the growth and development of Urdu. It may also be stated here that according to Doctor Ban, a French research scholar who wrote a book on Indian languages in 1900, the Urdu-knowing population in India then was 8 crore 25 lakhs; Telegu speaking: one crore seventy lakhs; Hindi speaking: thirty lakhs; Punjabi speaking: one crore sixty lakhs; Gujrati speaking: 95 lakhs; Bengali speaking: 3 crore ninety lakhs; Marathi speaking: one crore seventy lakhs and Tamil speaking: one crore and thirty lakhs. Sometime later, the Indian National Congress prepared a map about the languages according to which Urdu was spoken by about seventeen crore and twenty lakhs.

HIND URDU!

Another mischief was then perpetrated in that the Madrasi Prime Minister ordered the replacement of the word 'simple Urdu' by the word 'Hind Urdu' and also took pride in coining the term, claiming to have given a lead to the sub-continent. It may be noted here that the word 'Urdu' is of Turkish origin and this fact coupled with its being written in the Quranic script, have been largely responsible for its condemnation by Hindu revivalists who forget that it is the only language which came into being through the joint efforts and contact of Muslims and Hindus. The new word was opposed not only by Muslim masses but also by the Director of Education, Khawaja Ghulam Saiyidain and it was therefore withdrawn on the 4th of February, 1943.

On 8th February, 1943, by a Council Order No. 113/C, it was enacted that in future, the language to be used as medium of instructions and

named 'simple Urdu' was to have a common vocabulary consisting of words which were common to Urdu and Hindi but unfortunately the vocabulary officially prepared had two thousand such alleged Hindi words which, far from being common with Urdu language, could not be understood even by an averagely educated Hindi knowing person; they had been deliberately drawn from the orthodox Sanskrit language. The draft of the vocabulary was prepared by Doctor Raghu Vira of the International Academy of Indian Culture, Lahore, and was referred to a ten-member committee headed by the Home Minister, Khan Bahadur Jafar Ali Khan. The draft was submitted in March, 1942 and it took the Committee about ten to eleven months to scrutinise it. Ultimately it submitted a report with an improved and much enlarged vocabulary as the common medium of instruction. The Government divided the vocabulary into two parts. Part one consisted of simple Urdu words while part two of such Hindi words as were not included in part one but were considered necessary to enable students to take up Hindi after the 5th class. It was to be printed in two editions in the following manner:—

(*a*) Arranging the words in order of the Persian alphabet with their Devanagri rendering against each, and

(*b*) Arranging the words in order of the Devanagri alphabet with their Persian rendering against each.

In the language readers in either script, Hindi words taken from part II of the vocabulary, corresponding to simple 'Urdu' words in the main text, which were taken from part I, were to be given within brackets. A summary of part II Hindi words with their part I simple Urdu equivalents were also to be given at the beginning of each lesson in the language readers. A five percent margin of extra words outside the approved vocabulary were allowed to authors in the writing of all books including language readers; a ten percent margin being permissible in the case of the poetry section of language readers. The press note boastfully said:—

"The work involved careful selection, consultation with experts and examination of the whole problem from all points of view. The object of the vocabulary is primarily to suit the requirements of the State but it may be taken that the pioneering work done in the State will be of value in some measure at least, in the solution of the problem from the All India stand point."

The Committee, which considered the vocabulary, constituted as follows:—

1. Minister incharge Education, Chairman;
2. R.B. Pandit Ram Chandra Kak, Member;

3. Director of Education;
4. Mr. M.A. Shahmiri;
5. Mr. Sampurananand;
6. Mr. Mohammad Ibrahim, Principal;
7. Pandit B.M. Dattatraya Kaifi;
8. Doctor Abid Hussain;
9. Doctor Sidheshwar Verma;
10. Doctor Raghu Vira.

The Committee was also asked to suggest how text books in the approved vocabulary may be prepared, published and made available in the schools.

There was also in existence a Text-book committee which had a Muslim majority. Assuming that due to strong State-wide Muslim resentment, it would resist the introduction of the proposed text-books, it was reconstituted; by adding four Hindu and two Muslim members, it was converted into a Hindu majority committee. As the Committee was unable to arrive at a unanimous decision because of the difference of opinion between its Muslim members on the one hand and the Hindu members on the other, it was divided into two committees, one consisting entirely of Muslim and the other, of Hindu members. The Muslim members unanimously demanded that text-books for Muslims should be in Urdu vocabulary and that Hindi words which were not part of the Urdu language, as normally spoken or written, should not be included in it. The Hindu members were more reasonable than the Government. While they agreed that Urdu books may not contain any Hindi words, they recommended that Hindi text-books should contain words termed as Hindi in the vocabulary officially prepared; this meant that they supported the Government to the extent of importing orthodox and unintelligible Sanskrit words into Hindi. This was opposed by Muslims but the Hindus being in a majority, carried their point of view. However, it is interesting to point out that the Government rejected even their recommendations and announced that the so-called common vocabulary prepared by it shall be inserted in Urdu books also. The Text-book Committee was again reconstituted with the sole purpose of dropping Chaudhri Hameedullah Khan from its membership because of his steadfast and dedicated campaign against the imposition of Hindi.

The script orders created an uproar throughout the State. The first to issue a strong statement in condemnation of the move was Maulana Mohammad Saeed, General Secretary of the National Conference. He was followed by other top-ranking Muslim leaders of the party such as Mirza Mohammad Afzal Beg, Mian Ahmad Yar, Bakhshi

Ghulam Mohammad and Khawaja Ghulam Mohammad Sadiq. Among those outside the National Conference who also came out with strong statements voicing Muslim sentiments were Chaudhri Ghulam Abbas Khan, Mir Waiz Mohammad Yusuf Shah, Mr. A.R. Saghar, Qureshi Mohammad Yusuf and Chaudhri Hameedullah Khan.

The National Conference Working Committee which met in Srinagar on 28th November, 1940, condemned the move as "ill-conceived, mischievous and definitely anti-national". Pandit Prem Nath Bazaz suggested that the Government might be asked to make the knowledge of both the scripts compulsory for all students whether Muslims or non-Muslims. In his view this alternative was better than what the Government had decided to do; the Working Committee rejected the suggestion. All non-Muslim members opposed the official resolution which was adopted with a majority vote. The Working Committee also considered as to whether the Parliamentary group needed any instructions to move an adjournment motion in the Assembly but decided that it was competent to determine its course in the light of the Party stand. Pandit Prem Nath Bazaz, therefore, tendered his resignation from the Working Committee but continued his association with the Party as an ordinary member. Commenting on the script controversy, the Lahore Congress daily "Tribune" wrote in its issue of the 29th November:—

"We are not at all surprised that the script controversy has caused a rift in the ranks of the Kashmir National Conference. The attitude that the Conference or rather its Muslim members, who happen to be in an over-whelming majority in it, has taken up in this matter, is not only inconsistent with its professions of nationalism but has created feelings in the minds of non-Muslims that they cannot expect justice from the Conference Party in the matter of safeguarding their linguistic and cultural interests. The result is that the already few non-Muslims who are in the National Conference are one by one severing their connections with it....And what the Kashmir Government had done is to give recognition to both Devanagri and Persian scripts while keeping Urdu as the medium of instructions in educational institutions. Is there anything wrong or unreasonable in this act of Government? Was it not its duty to do so to satisfy the legitimate demand of the minority community? If anybody could have any grievance, it was the Hindus, because the Government, while conceding to them the right of having their children educated through the Devanagri script, still kept Urdu as the medium of instructions. But unfortunately it was left to the Muslim members of the National Conference Party, who were least expected to raise a controversy

on this issue, to read a meaning into the official order which it did not convey."

Commenting again on the National Conference agitation on the question, "Tribune" wrote on 9th December:—

"At its annual session held at Anantnag, the Jammu and Kashmir National Conference adopted a resolution embodying what is popularly termed as 'National Demand'. This 'National Demand' guaranteed to the minorities 'all the safeguards and weightages for protection of their legitimate linguistic, religious, cultural, political and economic rights accordiing to the principles enunciated, accepted or acted upon by the Indian National Congress from time to time'. Do the Muslim members of the Conference stand by that 'National Demand'? If so, may we enquire if their attitude on the script question is consistent with the assurance contained in the "Demand"?"

On 14th January, 1941, the National Conference organised a Statewide Protest Day against the script order and to endorse its W.C. resolution on the question. Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah addressed a huge meeting attended by about thirty thousand persons, held at Shahi Masjid, Srinagar. Mir Waiz Mohammad Yusuf Shah addressed a similar meeting at Eidgah.

There was also a further parting of ways between Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah and Pandit Prem Nath Bazaz. They had been jointly running a weekly, 'Hamdard', but in January, 1941, the former dissociated himself from it. The National Conference Working Committee met in Jammu in January and accepted the resignation of Pandit Prem Nath Bazaz. It also considered the correspondence that had passed between its President Sardar Budh Singh and the Prime Minister on the script question and the Arms Act.

NATIONAL CONFERENCE ASSEMBLY MEMBERS RESIGN IN PROTEST

A meeting of the National Conference General Council was held in Srinagar on 25th May, 1941. The Council, besides condemning the Arms Bill, demanded the withdrawal of the Devanagri Script Order. Pandit Prem Nath Bazaz opposed the resolution on the script question. A Pandit member moved an amendment demanding that the matter be referred to Congress leaders for opinion. It was strongly opposed by Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah who said that the Congress did not belong to the

Indians but it was a Congress of Sumpurnanands and Piyare Lals (the latter was Private Secretary to Mahatma Gandhi). Severely criticising the attitude of Mahatma Gandhi, Sheikh Abdullah said:—

> "Gandhiji does not always say in what he really believes. He has taken wrong decisions a thousand times. Hindus may treat him as a Mahatma but I am not prepared to do so. In the past he has committed a hundred mistakes. Every action of his is self-contradictory. *The communal tension in India is of his creation. It is he who has poisoned the politics of the sub-continent. In fact the truth is that Muslims are not at all at fault and it is Gandhiji who wants to be unjust to them. I know that Hindus are in control of the Congress. It is the Congress of fanatic Hindus like Sampurnanand and Piyare Lal*"[1]

Pandit Prem Nath Bazaz walked out of the Council session as a protest against the speech while Sh. Abdullah was still on his legs, answering his objections and explaining his own policy.

In Muzaffarabad, Muslim students boycotted their classes and took out a procession protesting against the attitude of their Headmaster who was forcing them to read Hindi. Chaudhri Hameedullah Khan moved an adjournment motion in the Assembly demanding cancellation of the script order. Speaking in support of his motion, he said that the Hindu Prime Minister wanted to destroy Muslim culture but that the Muslims were wide awake and determined to frustrate these efforts. He was supported by National Conference members Mian Ahmad Yar Khan, Mirza Mohammad Afzal Beg, Sheikh Mohammad Amin and Maulvi Ghulam Mustafa. The motion was disallowed by the President and, therefore, seventeen, out of the 21 elected Muslim members, staged a walk out against the aggressive attitude of the Government. The National Conference then called upon its Assembly members to resign their seats en bloc as a protest against the anti-Muslim policy of the Government. The direction was immediately obeyed; all of them tendered their resignations forthwith. The Party High Command explained its decision in a statement which stated:

> "The National Conference, despite having declared the 1939 Constitution as wholly unsatisfactory and reactionary, had co-operated with the Government in order to give it a fair trial as in its opinion there were some provisions which were useful and needed a trial. But, unfortunately, the Government has, of late, enacted laws which have destroyed even the faint hope of reaping any benefit from the said Constitution. Acting on the policy of divide and

1 Al Islah, June 1941.

rule, it enacted the Arms Act which exempted Hindu Rajputs on the false pretence of religious duties although in British India Hindu Rajputs have never demanded exemption from the Arms Act on this ground. The Government then introduced a double script although the Education Reforms Committee, which included such eminent educationists as Doctor Zakir Hussain, had expressed the opinion that it will divide Hindus and Muslims into two groups; again, Glancy recommendations with regard to the Services have been ignored; the Conference is therefore of the opinion that the Government is deliberately resorting to measures that are bound to result in increasing the inter-communal tension. The National Conference Assembly Party walked out of the Assembly as a protest against these dangerous moves and submitted a report to the Parliamentary Sub-committee. After due consideration, the Working Committee has decided to call upon its Assembly members to resign from their seats as the Party does not deem it proper to take any drastic action, for the time-being, in view of the international situation."

THE NEW CONSTITUTION

A new and more comprehensive Constitution was promulgated on 7th September, 1939, by the Maharaja. It had been drafted by his personal Advisers and it seems that Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, the eminent lawyer from Allahabad, was largely responsible for the document. Nominally it increased the number of elective seats in the Legislative Assembly from 33 to 40 in a House of seventy-five and thus gave an impression that it now had an elected-majority but the truth remains that it was a device to hood-wink casual observers. The seven seats transferred from the nominated quota were termed as 'special quota constituencies' and were to be filled in by the following:—

(*a*) Tazimi Sardars:

(1) Jammu province including Chenani and Poonch Jagir.

(2) Kashmir province including Frontier districts.

(*b*) Jagirdars, Muafidars and Mukkararidars holding a jagir, Muafi or Mukkarari from the State of not less than rupees five hundred per annum:

(3) Jammu province including Chenani and Poonch Jagir.

(4) Kashmir province including Frontier districts.

(c) Land holders owning land assessed to land revenue of not less than rupees 250 per annum:

(5) Jammu province including Chenani and Poonch Jagir.

(6) Kashmir province including Frontier districts.

(d) Pensioners receiving rupees 100 or more as monthly pension:

(7) Jammu and Kashmir State.

It needs no argument to show that members elected on such an extremely-restricted franchise, confined as it was to a small minority whose very existence and influence depended upon the absolute rule of the Dogra dynasty, could be no other than those who were more loyal than the King himself. Experience also shows that these seven persons invariably supported the Government.

The people of Ladakh, Baltistan and Gilgit were denied the right of popular representation. Instead, the Maharaja reserved to himself the right to nominate two Buddhists from Ladakh and one Muslim each from Askardu, Kargil and Gilgit.

Even with this limited franchise and such over-whelming majority in the Assembly, the Maharaja still lacked self-confidence as is true of all despots. Therefore, he reserved all powers to himself and this is what Section 5 of the Constitution laid down:—

"Notwithstanding anything contained in this or any other Act, all powers, Legislative, Executive and Judicial, in relation to the State and its Government are hereby declared to be and to have always been inherent in and possessed and retained by His Highness and nothing contained in this or any other Act shall affect or be deemed to have affected the right and prerogative of His Highness to make laws, and issue proclamations, orders and ordinances by virtue of his inherent authority."

How powerless the Assembly was, may be judged from Section 24 of the Constitution which dealt with reserved matters:—

"It shall not be lawful for the Praja Sabha to consider or deal with any matter or enact any law relating to or affetcing:

(a) His Highness or any member of the royal family or the management of the royal household;

(b) Relations, treaties, conventions or agreements between the State and His Majesty the King Emperor of India or the Government of India or with foreign powers or the Government of any State in India now subsisting or in force or hereafter to be established or made;

(c) Matters of Frontier policy including those relating to Ladakh and Gilgit;

(d) Such matters relating to the Jagirs of Poonch and Chenani as His Highness may specify;

(e) Rights specifically granted to Illaqadars or Jagirdars by their sanads;

(f) The organisation, discipline and control of the State forces;

(g) The departments declared by His Highness from time to time as Hazur departments;

(h) The Dharmarth Trust;

(i) The provisions of this Act and the rules made thereunder and their repeal or modification; and

(j) Such other matters as may be specified by His Highness from time to time.".[1]

Section 28 provided, among other things, that if an Assembly member had a conviction against him by a criminal Court for an offence punishable with a sentence of imprisonment for a term of six months or more and the sentence was subsisting or an order binding him to be of good behaviour or an order of internment or externment had been passed by a Magistrate or the Council of Ministers or the His Highness which was still in force, unless a period of five years or such less period as His Highness may allow in any particular case, had elapsed since his release, he was to lose his seat. Maulana Masudi and A.R. Saghar had been sentenced to six months imprisonment in 1938 and though returned to the Assembly unopposed, were hit by the provision and lost their seats. Mr. Mohammad Abdullah, father of the now famous Qudratullah Shahab, was later elected in the bye-election in place of Mr. Saghar. The provision itself was mischievous and undemocratic because Assembly members are, invariably, political workers and on account of frequent

1. J & K Laws, Vol. III, p. 811.

clashes between the political parties and the autocratic regimes, they are bound to suffer imprisonment, internment and externment. The life of the Assembly being only three years, the provision was designed to keep out leading members of the National Conference and the Muslim Conference (both Muslim in character).

Section 31 provided that even the Prime Minister could, on the passage of a Bill by the Assembly, refuse to forward it to the Maharaja for his assent and return it for reconsideration in whole or in part together with any amendments which he may recommend. Thus the prerogative enjoyed by the Head of the State was also conferred on the Head of the Administration. It seems that this device was adopted to spare the Maharaja of the blame that is usually attracted by refusal to assent to a bill.

Even if a Government bill failed to receive a passage, it could still be enforced and the intention seems to have been to further reduce the importance of the Assembly. This is what Section 34 of the Constitution laid down:—

> "Where the Praja Sabha refuses leave to introduce, or fails to pass in a form recommended by the Council, any Bill, His Highness may declare that the proposed legislation is essential for the good Government, safety or tranquillity of the State and such Bill shall, on such declaration, become an Act as if it had been passed by the Praja Sabha and assented to by His Highness".

It had been hoped by the general public and particularly by the National Conference circles that with the conversion of the Muslim Conference into the National Conference and with Mr. Ayyengar at the helm of administration, the Government would adopt a reasonable attitude towards the political aspirations of the people and initiate some measures for the attainment of responsible Government. Unfortunately for everybody, these hopes proved to be unreal. The enforcement of the Arms Act, the imposition of Hindi, victimisation of political workers and the extremely anti-people attitude adopted in the Assembly to stifle opposition, embittered feelings and led to a widening of the gulf that already separated the Maharaja and the people. Meanwhile important developments were taking place on the international scene. By the middle of 1943, Africa had been cleared of the Axis and Italy as well as Germany had been put on the defensive. There was no doubt now that the Allies were winning the war. The Cripps proposals, the Quit India Movement and the immense popularity that was being daily gained by the All India Muslim League were clear indications that a political settlement in the sub-continent could

no longer be much delayed after the war. The Maharaja, therefore, seems to have been advised to take steps, even if half-hearted, towards the democratisation of the Government. The grim reality seems to have dawned, though not fully, that the days of personal rule were fast coming to an end.

THE ROYAL COMMISSION

It was under these circumstances that on 14th July, 1943, a few days before the departure of Sir Maharaj Singh, the Prime Minister, the Maharaja announced the appointment of a committee known as "The Royal Commission of Inquiry" which was headed by Chief Justice Ganga Nath. It had twenty members, six of whom were Muslims. The National Conference was represented by Mirza Mohammad Afzal Beg and Khawaja Ghulam Mohammad Sadiq. It was set up at a time when Quaid-e-Azam was in correspondence with Lord Wavell with regard to the situation obtaining in the State.

The Commission held its first meeting in Srinagar on 19th August, 1943, and its last meeting was also held here on 27th October, 1944. In all it examined two hundred witnesses among whom were Khawaja Ghulam Nabi Gilkar, Maulvi Abdul Wahid, Editor Al-Islah and Maulvi Mohammad Abdullah Nasr-u-Din. While the former two effectively brought home the economic and social disparity of Muslims in various districts and their backwardness in the educational field, Mr. Nasr-u-Din placed before it the justification of Muslim demand for cow-slaughter and the repeal of the penal law making it punishable with imprisonment of ten years. Fully acquainted with Sanskrit, the Maulana made a deep impression while quoting from Vedas and Shastras, to support his contention that cow-killing was permitted among the early Aryans and that there was no forfeiture of property on conversion to another faith. All communities including Hindus, Harijans, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains and Christians presented their grievances and examined witnesses in support of their respective claims. The National Conference and the Muslim Conference boycotted it, as in their view, it fell far short of their expectations and also because its composition was a clear indication that it was a mere eye-wash. Because of their boycott, the Commission lost much of its importance. Even otherwise, it was idle to expect anything spectacular from a Commission of such composition.

The Commission was told by Wazir Feroze Chand, the Revenue Commissioner, that while land revenue in Kashmir valley was assessed at thirty percent of the produce, in Jammu province it was assessed at twenty

five percent. Doctor Gobind Lal Vashnevi, Director Medical Services, told the Commission that only 1/30th of the State's income was spent on medical aid: the total amount spent under this head in 1943 was rupees nineteen lacs. The Inspector General of Customs told the Commission that custom was levied even on tea valued at rupees five and on salt of the quantity of 20 seers.

On 27th October, 1944, the Chairman placed before the members a copy of the report that he had prepared for submission to the Government and asked them to sign it. It is interesting to note that all members unanimously refused to affix their signatures unless and until each paragraph was discussed and stamped with approval. This was not acceptable to the Chairman and the members, therefore, walked out in protest. It is said that the Chairman then submitted the report to the Maharaja. When we recall that after the boycott of the Commission by the National Conference and the Muslim Conference, it was left with wholly pro-Government members led by Major General Janak Singh, a very close relative of the Maharaja, one is naturally intrigued as to why the report was not signed by them? The inner story shall perhaps never be known in its entirety because none except the Maharaja, the Chairman and Janak Singh knew it. It, however, appears from circumstantial evidence that Ganga Nath, having been under constant criticism both inside as well as outside the Assembly for his anti-Muslim utterances, had become conscious of his highly controversial position as Chairman of such an important Commission, at least in so far as the cruel verdict of history was concerned. It was reported in the columns of weekly "Javed", the non-official organ of the Muslim Conference and edited by the normally knowledgeable Mr. Saghar, that the Chairman made the following recommendations:—

(1) The Arms Act be amended which in effect meant that the exemption granted to Hindu Rajputs from the operation of the Act to enable them to keep fire-arms without a licence, was to be repealed.

(2) The sentence in the case of cow-slaughter be reduced from ten to two years.

(3) Proprietary rights be given to tenants all over the State.

(4) The status of Hindi and Urdu, as it then existed, be maintained and that there should be no further orders in this connection.

(5) Forfeiture of property on conversion from Hinduism should be maintained.

The Government being too conscious of its Hindu character and drawing its source and strength from the fanatic Hindu elements in the sub-continent, was not willing to go so far as to accept such part of the recommendations that either reduced the feudal or penal burden on the Muslims or deprived the Hindus of their superior citizenship by bringing them at par with their Muslim countrymen. It seems that efforts to persuade Mr. Ganga Nath in the opposite direction had failed and, therefore, the device adopted to sabotage the report, was by using the Government hordes in the Commission in the manner indicated above. That Ganga Nath retired soon afterwards (and was succeeded by K.B. Sheikh Abdul Qaiyum of the same High Court) lends support to the "Javed" report. It is also important to point out that the report was not contradicted.

KAZAK REFUGEES

About four thousand Kazak refugees driven out by Russian Communists entered Ladakh after years of guerrilla warfare. Among their principal leaders were Mohammad Ilyas and Usman Pasha. They had about four thousand horses, three thousand camel and twenty thousand sheep. The Dogra army stationed at Ladakh at first made a desperate effort to prevent their entry but as the borders were partly ill-defined, partly undefined and, in any case, too large to be defended by the Maharaja's Government, the effort to prevent their journey to Leh proved futile. The truth is that the Government came to know of their entry only when they were a few marches away from Leh. They were permitted to remain in and around Leh while negotiations continued. The refugees sought permission to settle anywhere in the State but the Dogra Government was the last on this planet to accept such a request because it meant not only the addition of four thousand heads to the local Muslim population but what is more, it also meant the presence of a four thousand strong martial community who had taken up arms against Communists in defence of their honour and were apt to do so again anywhere else. Having failed to get permission for resettlement, despite public demands voiced all over the State, they requested for a passage to British India, the Government of India having agreed to allow them entry. An agreement was, therefore, arrived at which authorised the Government to disarm the refugees and in return, provide them with a passage through the State territory. The heartless Dogras, however, deliberately delayed their departure from Leh and gave permission only after snow had begun to fall on the Zojilla Pass.

According to a resolution passed by the National Conference Working Committee, dozens of them were killed and hundreds of cattle lost while crossing the pass. The resolution also stated that no medical aid was provided. The National Conference requested for permission to render them relief but this humanitarian request was rejected. The Government very cruelly laid down a strange route for their exit. The normal route was to bring them to Bandipura and thence straight to Muzaffarabad *via* Jhelum valley road. It would have spared the refugees the great hardship and the loss of life and cattle that they had to suffer while crossing the State on the difficult and maiden route chalked out for them. They were brought to village Khadanyar, about three miles outside Baramula town on the right side of Jhelum towards Uri. This writer visited the camp like hundreds of other citizens of Baramula and saw their sad plight. Hunger, sickness and long journeys through dense forests and steep mountains had almost broken their bones and yet they looked a cheerful people and took pride in having undergone these hardships to preserve their faith and maintain their freedom.

From here they were taken to Muzaffarabad where they were housed in temporary camps on the out-skirts of the town. The Government of India sent an English officer of the Political department who had separate meetings with Ilyas and Usman Pasha and also visited the refugee camp and the hospital. Ultimately it took over the responsibility of their maintenance. Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah and Maulana Masudi visited them at Khadanyar and Muzaffarabad. One of these visits to Muzaffarabad took place on 5th February, 1942 when they brought truck loads of relief articles. The National Conference had already set up a Relief Committee in Srinagar with Bakhshi Ghulam Mohammad as Chairman. Had the Government accepted its offer, the relief work could have been organised on a much wider scale. Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah visited Delhi alongwith Maulana Masudi and had talks with officials of the Government of India for their relief and resettlement. As a result of his representations, New Delhi made a grant of rupees three lacs for their immediate relief. In Muzaffarabad, they lost a woman who was abducted by some unknown persons. They gave the Government three days ultimatum for restoring her to their relatives. The Dogra army which was camping in the town was immediately summoned. It surrounded their camp and there was some bloodshed. Ultimately the refugees left for Punjab on 5th May, 1942.

They were not resettled at any particular place in British India. With the passage of time they got scattered over north India and particularly in the districts of Jhelum, Gujrat, Gujranwala, Rawalpindi and Lahore. This writer saw a large number of them in Jhelum in 1950-51.

They were doing a thriving business in Karakuli caps. A few years later, after we had entered into the Amercian-sponsored Military alliances, they suddenly disappeared from the town and rumours have been current persistently that they were picked up by the Central Intelligence Agency of the United States, smuggled out of Pakistan and after training, at least some of them were smuggled into the Soviet Union for spying. In December, 1973, this writer met two Kazak shop-keepers in Mecca who had been among these refugees. They confirmed that some had "gone" back to Soviet Russia.

SERVICES, INCOME, LITERACY

The All India Educational Conference held its 17th session in Srinagar under the presidentship of Mr. Amar Nath Jha, Vice Chancellor of the Allahabad University. The working sessions were held between the 25th and 29th of September, 1941. An education exhibition was inaugurated by Doctor Zakir Hussain. The Conference was inaugurated by Maharaja Hari Singh. Among topics discussed were University education, training for teachers, Secondary education, technical education, moral and religious education, international fees, modern education and examinations. It was a great success as almost all sections of people, except the Kashmiri Pandits, extended their whole-hearted support. The Pandit community had been campaigning for the removal of Khawaja Ghulam Saiyidain from the post of the Director of Education and as the Conference was being held in Srinagar on his initiative and he being in over-all charge of its arrangements which was incidentally the first All India Conference of any kind to be held in the State, the Pandit community made frantic efforts to sabotage the arrangements but made a miserable failure. Daily "Martand", official organ of the Pandit political party "The Sanatan Dharam Yovak Sabha", carried the following verse of Iqbal for years at the head of its front page under the caption "Director Education and We":—

"نہیں منت کش تاب شنیدن داستاں میری
خموشی گفتگو ہے، بے زبانی ہے زباں میری"

"Martand" accused Khawaja Ghulam Saiyidain of pursuing an anti-Hindu policy. How could such a policy be pursued in a State where the administration from top to bottom was in the hands of Hindus? That this propaganda was mischievous and unfounded, is proved from the fact that Sir Gopalaswami Ayyengar paid warm compliments to Saiyidain in course of his address at the Conference. Saiyidain who retired as Education Secretary of free India, belonged to the pro-Congress Jamia Milia School of thought in the field of education. It was because of his efforts to do

justice, in so far as he could in the circumstances of the State, to the Muslims in the matter of services, scholarships, foreign training and expansion of educational facilities, that the Pandits were unhappy with him.

The Glancy Commission had made it obligatory for the Government to publish, annually, a statement showing the representation of different communities in the Services. The purpose was obvious. In 1947 the Government, therefore, placed before the State Assembly the following statement showing the representation of various communities between April, 1944 and April, 1945:—

Cadre		*Muslims*	*Hindus*	*Sikhs*	*Others*
Gazetted	..	150	325	21	11
Non-gazetted	..	4,269	6,875	566	128
IVth grade servants	..	3,568	3,546	635	217

This table would show that the over-all Muslim representation was hardly forty percent as against their population figures of seventy-seven percent. In the gazetted cadre it was not more than thirty percent. However, it must be conceded that there had been a marked improvement since 1931.

In 1942-43, the State income, according to the Administration report, was three crore thirteen lacs and eighty five thousand rupees. The main items of revenue were as follows:—

Forests	Rs. 83,64,000
Customs	Rs. 67,30,000
Land Revenue	Rs. 55,69,000
Silk Department	Rs. 41,91,000

According to the statement of Income and Expenditure placed before the State Assembly, the income for the year 1944-45 was rupees four crore twenty lacs and fifty four thousand out of which, forests accounted for rupees one crore fourteen lacs. The total expenditure on roads, Public Works Department, Education, Medical, Agriculture, Veterinary, Co-operatives, Panchayats and Village up-lift was only rupees eighty eight lacs twenty seven thousand which came to 20.8 percent of the total income.

The total number of civil as well as criminal cases pending in the Courts in 1944 was 63,379. The number of educational institutions was 1888 out of which 269 were for girls. The number of students was one lakh eighteen thousand one hundred ten. The number of Muslim students was sixty one thousand five hundred seventy one, which means about 52 percent.

In 1945 the number of tourists rose to thirty two thousand six hundred seventy six. They included eighteen thousand five hundred sevcnty five foreigners. Among them, five thousand spent the summer in Gulmarg, four thousand at Nagin Bagh, three thousand seven hundred seventy seven at Pahalgam and 425 went as far away as Sonamarg. The number of hotels went up in Gulmerg from 7 to 19 in five years and from one to five in the Nagin Bagh.

According to the statement made by Mr. Abdul Wahid, Editor, Al-Islah, before the Royal Enquiry Commission, the average daily income, as per census of 1941, in different districts was as follows:—

Jammu district	.. Rs. 2.00 to Rs.3.50 per month per head.
Kathua	.. Rs. 2.00
Udhampur	.. Rs. 2.50
Reasi	.. Rs. 3.00
Mirpur	.. Rs. 3.00
Baramula	.. Rs. 4.00
Anantnag	.. Rs. 2.50 to Rs. 4.00
Ladakh & Askardu	.. Rs. 1.25
Kargil	.. Rs. 0-7-9

According to the 1941 census, the rate of literacy was as follows:

Jammu district	.. 5.58%
Kathua	.. 5.77%
Udhampur	.. 5.56%
Reasi	.. 4.2 %
Mirpur	.. 7.5 %
Baramula	.. 4.3 %
Srinagar district	.. 3.95%
Pulwama	.. 3.88%
Anantnag	.. 5.6 %
Kulgam	.. 5.6 %
Askardu	.. 1.27%
Srinagar city	.. 21.91%
Jammu city	.. 35.26%

The economic condition of the people was deteriorating partly because of the rising cost of living but mainly because of the absence of opportunity for employment. But for the recruitment in the Indian army due to the World War, there would have been a near famine. Food was very scarce. Same was the case with fuel, especially in Srinagar. Rationing was introduced in important towns but the supply was irregular, besides, being much below the requirement per head. Black market therefore thrived and one has to record it with sorrow that the Government took no effective steps to punish the hoarders and black marketeers only because the bulk among them were influential Hindus. The Maharaja started a Poor Fund with a personal donation of rupees two lacs which was used mainly to provide employment to eight thousand labourers who normally went to Punjab for seasonal employment in winter and partly to help the needy and the distressed. Obviously, these measures, commendable no doubt, were, however, infinitely inadequate to meet the growing unemployment and poverty.

Unfortunately the position in the Northern region where there was neither any organised public opinion nor any press or platform, was far worse. It was still ruled like a medieval kingdom. In Baltistan, for instance, even as late as 1944, villagers were required to supply, on demand, to Government employees, firewood at the rate of 2½ annas per maund whereas in the market at Astore it was sold at five annas per maund. Ghee was to be supplied to them at Rs. 2 per seer; hen for six annas a seer; eggs, one paisa per egg and milk, six annas per seer. The poor people had to purchase these articles from the market at higher rates and supply the same at a loss to themselves.

JAMMU FOOD RIOTS

The food scarcity was extremely grave in Jammu city. Meetings were held and processions taken out demanding more ration shops and better and regular supply. The Government did not take timely notice of the angry mood of the people. Atta was sold at rupees sixteen per maund. In July, 1943, the Government was ill-advised to close down cheap food shops with the result that Hindu Mahajans began stocking wheat and selling it in the black market. It is possible that some Hindu officers may have been in league with the anti-social elements. By 23rd September, the public agitation assumed dangerous proportions. The Government arrested some leaders but as normally happens in such situations, instead of silencing the people, it deepened their anger mainly because the matter directly concerned every family. The Government, therefore, enforced Defence Rule 50 and prohibited the holding of meetings and

taking out of processions. In order to register their protest against these measures, about one thousand persons collected in the city chowk. The Police resorted to a lathi charge but had to withdraw as the mob retaliated with brick-bats and lathis. They burnt down the car of the District Magistrate as also a police lorry. On 24th September at about 6.30 p.m., a group of five students suddenly appeared at the city chowk to initiate a civil disobedience movement. A mob estimated at about six thousand which had already collected at the chowk, shouted anti-Government slogans. This infuriated the armed police, resulting in a clash. The Police was ordered to open fire. Nine persons, including two Muslims, were killed and thirteen injured.

The firing was condemned by all sections of the people. Public meetings were held and hartal observed in sympathy with the victims of the firing. In response to a demand voiced from every quarter, the Government appointed a Commission with Sir Gobind Madgaonkar, an ex-Judge of the Bombay High Court, as Chairman and Doctor P.K. Sen, ex-Judge Patna High Court and a member of the Maharaja's Judicial Board of Advisers and Mr. Justice Qazi Masud-ul-Hassan of the Jammu and Kashmir High Court as members to enquire into the incident and locate its responsibility. Appointed on 11th October, 1943, the Commission submitted its report on 5th January, 1944. All political parties co-ordinated their efforts to present the people's point of view before the Commission which held its sittings in Jammu city. It was for the first time that even Dogras co-operated with their Muslim neighbours in condemning the Government and exposing its anti-people policy. The Commission unanimously recommended the dismissal of Pandit Raghu Nath Kaul A.S.P. and fourteen armed policemen who had resorted to unnecessary firing; it also recommended the forced retirement of Lala Bej Nath D.S.P. after completing the period of service necessary to earn full pension. The Commission recommended censure of Mr. Said Ali, Inspector-Police and also recommended that no responsible post in the executive should in future be given to Pandit Sukhya Lal Raina, A.D.M. The Maharaja declined to dismiss the constables on the ground that they had acted on the orders of their superiors. The Maharaja's stand was justified because any one in his place with any sense of duty and conscience would have acted in the same manner. The Government paid rupees thirty six thousand as compensation to the dependents of the deceased. The Maharaja also ordered that the balance of pay and allowances, amounting to rupees five thousand, payable to Thakar Himat Singh, an Additional Revenue Commissioner from U.P. on deputation to Kashmir Government as Revenue Minister, be forfeited on account of the dereliction of duty. By the time the order was passed, the Thakar was already back in U. P.



یہ ہماری جاودانی زندگانی کے نشان
چاند تاروں کی طرح روشن ہیں زیر آسماں

The silk factory remained closed for two hundred and fifty-seven days out of 429 days from 28th Maghar, 1998 to the 29th of Magh, 2000. The daily wage of a skilled worker was annas eight and nine pies and of an unskilled worker five annas only. One can imagine the abject poverty of a factory worker who was paid so little and who was employed only for less than six months a year.

TARA DEVI AS REGENT

Towards the beginning of 1944, Maharaja Hari Singh was appointed a member of the Imperial War Council as a representative of the Indian Princes. Sir Feroze Khan Noon represented British India. On the eve of his departure for London, he appointed a Regency Council to carry on the dayto-day administration in his absence. It consisted of the following:—

1. Her Highness Maharani Tara Devi, Chairman.
2. General Janak Singh.
3. Sir B.N. Rao, Prime Minister.

The Maharaja also laid down in writing that:—

1. No change shall take place in the Government;
2. The orders issued by him from time to time shall neither be changed nor amended;
3. *Sentences of death or life imprisonment or other sentences needing his confirmation shall await such confirmation until his return*;
4. No new gazetted post shall be filled in nor shall a non-gazetted post be upgraded;
5. Promotion to gazetted posts and punishment of gazetted officers shall remain in suspense;
6. No additional expenditure exceeding rupees one lac shall be incurred;
7. All political matters shall await his return;
8. The Prime Minister shall maintain a memo of his talks with the officials of the Government of India.

The Maharaja arrived in London on 11th April. It seems that relations between him and Tara Devi were sore for a long time.

Maharaja Hari Singh was not free from the vices that normally go with youth or feudalism but the truth remains that whether it was Gulab Singh, Ranbir Singh, Pratap Singh or Hari Singh, in the matter of moral turpitude, as commonly understood, they were above the average Nawabs and Rajas of the sub-continent and it must be recorded to their credit, in fairness to everybody including this writer's responsibility as a historian, that as far as my enquiries are concerned, they were not publicly involved in any scandal with any subject woman. So far as Muslims are concerned, only one woman, Bua Bundan from Poonch is traced among the concubines of Gulab Singh. Similarly, Bua Murad Begum from Gilgit was a concubine of Ranbir Singh. It is possible there may have been others. However, these were exceptions and not a rule. The truth remains that they did not maintain harems as understood from the term and as was the universal practice with Rajas and Nawabs in northern India. They employed no agents to search for delicate beauties among their subjects. In this respect their sense of honour and duty, in their capacity as rulers, was admirable and enviable. Why Hari Singh did not divorce his wife is partly because she was the mother of the heir-apparent, crown prince Karan Singh, and partly because divorce being unknown to orthodox Hindu Law, he could not afford, as a Hindu ruler, to take such a step. Another reason was perhaps his realisation that after all, his wife was little to blame.

A Hindu-Muslim clash occurred in Jammu on 29th August, 1945, on the occasion of the Janam Ashtami procession. Offensive slogans were raised by the processionists against Muslims and the Muslim League and, as a protest, a few Muslim youngsters who were watching the procession, raised counter slogans. It was a signal for the Hindus to attack Muslims in various localities of the city. Five shops belonging to Muslims were looted but no action was taken against them. This pattern was followed at other places as Hindus were becoming aggressive. In Bhadarwah, on 24th Phagan 2003 (March 1947) a Brahmin, Rakhi Chand, fired on four Muslims (two of whom were Abdul Haiy and Ghulam Hassan Khan) though they remained unhurt. On an enquiry made by the local administration, it was found that the rifle belonged to Bakhshi Thakar Das, Tehsildar Bhadarwah. No action was taken against him.

On 15th February, 1946, another Hindu-Muslim riot took place in Jammu city while Muslims were observing Eid-e-Milad. The procession taken out to celebrate the birth of the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him), was attacked by Hindus, leading to a hand to hand fight. Twenty eight persons were hospitalised, two of whom, one from each community, later succumbed to their injuries. Twenty four persons, mostly Muslims, were arrested. Rule 50 of the

Defence Rules banning processions and public meetings was promulgated. Within three days the number of the injured rose to seventy two. The city observed a complete hartal for many days. A public meeting was held in Srinagar condemning the attack on the procession. Curfew was clamped down and collective fines imposed. A tribunal consisting of Pandit Sri Chand Dutt, a retired A.D.M. and Khawaja Abdul Qadir, Sub Judge, Udhampur, was appointed to try the riot cases.

In the World War, 71,667 soldiers were provided by the Jammu and Kashmir State.[1] They were directly recruited by the Indian authorities. About forty thousand hailed from Poonch district alone. Detachments of Jammu and Kashmir army were also sent for active service. Among them was the Ist Jammu and Kashmir Mountain Battery which left India on 25th September, 1940 for the Middle East under the command of Major (later Lt. Col.) Bhagwan Singh. It participated in the campaign in Africa. The Maharaja sanctioned a hereditary jagir of rupees 3600 per annum in favour of Bhagwan Singh.

A sum of fifty thousand sterling was contributed by the Maharaja towards the Governor General's fund for the purchase of tanks and war planes. A committee under the chairmanship of Maharani Tara Devi, set up for the welfare of the armed forces, collected about seven lac rupees. Lacs of rupees were also contributed by the Government towards the war fund. In recognition of these services, the Maharaja was granted the honorary rank of Lt. General and his wife was made a member of the Imperial Order of the Crown.

Lord and Lady Wavell visited Kashmir in October, 1945, for a week. They came on 7th October and visited Gulmarg on 13th October. Imaginary photographs of the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him), Hazrat Imam Hussain and Hazrat Imam Hassan found mysteriously hung in the Art gallery at the Exhibition grounds on 11th October were quickly removed before any untoward incident could take place. Lord and Lady Wavell were at the time at the premises. Muslim demand for an inquiry was brushed aside. A memorandum was submitted to the Viceroy by the Muslim Conference workers from Srinagar supporting the Muslim League's demand for Pakistan and detailing their grievances against the Maharaja's Government.

THE PRESS

The first paper to be published from the State was the weekly "Ranbir" named after Maharaja Ranbir Singh and published by a public-spirited

1 Mr. Sarwar Abbasi in Kasheer, Oct. 1976.

Dogra youth Mr. Mulak Raj Saraf. It was started from Jammu in June, 1924. Despite its moderate views and pronounced pro-Dogra leanings, it was ordered to stop publication in May, 1930 for having published proceedings of a procession taken out in the city to protest against the arrest of Mr. Gandhi by the British Government. The announcement of the Maharaja said:—

"It is not my intention to curb in any way the legitimate expression of opinion or fair and just criticism of the policy and acts of myself and my Government. The policy regarding these matters will continue unchanged and I shall be quite willing to entertain applications whether in Jammu or in Kashmir from other journalists wishing to start another newspaper or newspapers within the State territory so long as their bona fides are not in question."

Many applications had been vainly moved for the grant of permission to publish weekly papers. After the recommendations of the Glancy Commission, a press law, largely on the lines of a similar law in vogue in British India, was enforced in May, 1932; some newsppapers made their appearance soon after. The Press could be divided into two groups: the Muslim Press and the Hindu Press; both advanced the interests of their respective co-religionists and were exclusively owned, edited and staffed by them. It must be said to the credit of Pandit Prem Nath Bazaz that he blazed a new trail. Making a pleasant departure, he not only employed Muslims on his staff but also pursued a policy of liberalism, uninfluenced by petty communal considerations. He also helped many political workers, irrespective of their party affiliations, to gain prominence.

At the time of partition, the more important papers and the parties they represented were as follows:—

1. The daily "Khidmat" Srinagar, official organ of the National Conference;
2. Weekly "Javed" Jammu, the unofficial mouth-piece of the Muslim Conference;
3. Weekly "Ranbir", a pro-Government and pro-Congress newspaper;
4. Daily "Hamdard" edited and owned by Pandit Prem Nath Bazaz;
5. Daily "Martand", official organ of the Kashmiri Pandits;
6. Weekly "Al-Islah" of the Ahmedia community;
7. Weekly "Shamsheer", official organ of the Sikhs.

There were three English weeklies, "The Kashmir Times", "The Kashmir Chronicle" and the "Sentinel". The National Conference started an English version of daily "Khidmat" towards the end of 1945 but it did not last long because of the Quit Kashmir Movement. Pandit Kayshup Bandhu owned and edited a weekly newspaper called "Desh". It advocated, largely, a socialist policy. Some papers were published by private individuals from Srinagar, Jammu and Mirpur. Among them were weekly "Chand", weekly "Such" published from Mirpur by late Raja Mohammad Akbar Khan, weekly "Rehbar" Srinagar and weeklies "Millat" and "Jauhar", Srinagar edited by Mir Abdul Aziz and non-official organs of the Muslim Conference. Mr. Abdul Majid Qarshi owned and edited a weekly named "Jamhoor". Munshi Meraj Din owned and edited Weekly "Pasban" and Mr. Ghulam Haider Ghouri owned and edited weekly "Naujawan". These were published from Jammu. In 1940 a Kashmiri weekly "Gash", meaning light, started publication from Srinagar. It was owned by Mr. Mohammad Amin. It was the first and the only paper to be published in Kashmiri language but it is a curious fact that it had to close down because Kashmiri is largely an unwritten language and it is therefore difficut to read it.

However, except for "Hamdard", "Khidmat" and "Javed", they did not sell more than a few hundred each. Daily "Khidmat", being official organ of the National Conference, was purchased and sold like a party paper and the Party naturally saw to it that its workers took interest in its sale and distribution. Weekly "Javed" also had considerable sale, partly because of being the unofficial organ of the Muslim Conference but largely because of the personal political standing of its talented and shrewd Editor-*cum*-proprietor Mr. A.R. Saghar. However, it must be recorded in fairness to everybody that the best newspaper and with the largest circulation, was the daily "Hamdard". It was published on six pages of a large size. Its get up and printing was superior to every other paper and its presentation of news as well as views on various topics of political interest was always balanced, admirable and interesting. Having given up active party politics since 1941, Pandit Bazaz, a man of great talents, intelligence and perseverance and with a broad liberal political outlook, completely merged himself in his paper and built it up so much that the great Quaid-e-Azam likened it with a London paper. Pandit Bazaz was also in personal touch with political workers from all over the State, irrespective of their party affiliations and thus had the unique opportunity of being in the know of political currents and cross-currents. A man of great courage, the credit for destroying the mass popularity of the National Conference among the Muslims of Kashmir valley must, largely, go to him. He had to pay for it several times, both at the hands of the Government which either demanded cash securities or imposed

censorship or the National Conference which resorted to hooliganism. In 1946 he was shot at while returning to his home from his office and severely wounded. He was confined to bed for several months but the paper continued to appear regularly under the able stewardship of comrade Mir Abdul Aziz.

The entry of daily "Dawn" into Government offices was banned in 1943. There was no written order but all colleges, schools and libraries suddenly stopped purchasing it. No explanation was offered by the Head of any institution and it seems that they had been verbally told to discontinue its subscription. Mr. Khurshid Hassan Khurshid, General Secretary of the Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Students Union and Mr. S.A. Rehman, Organizing Secretary, met Sir Maharaj Singh, the Prime Minister, in May, 1943, and later called on the Director of Education and the Chief Secretary but in vain. Even offers by the Muslim students to purchase it with their own funds and place it in the College libraries was rejected. In 1940, entry of daily "Ehsan", a Muslim newspaper from Lahore, was banned. The ban was condemned in a public meeting held in Srinagar under the auspices of the Muslim League.

Freedom of press as understood in the post-independence era was unknown. Apart from countless restrictions inherent in the Press laws, the Government reserved the right to interfere even on trivial matters; this power was very often abused. Even this was not considered enough and, therefore, newspapers were divided into two categories. Roughly, we may divide them into the White List and the Black List. Government press notes and advertisements were reserved only for the White List. The result was that these privileges were available only to the pro-Government papers. This retarded the growth of the press because private advertisements were unknown and newspapermen depended upon Government advertisements to keep their papers going.

In 1945, weekly "Pasban" which is now published from Sialkot by the same Editor Mr. Meraj-ud-Din Ahmad, was compelled to tender an apology for having criticised the Prime Minister. The same year censorship was imposed on "Hamdard", "Vitasta" and "Javed". Weeklies "Rehbar" and "Islah" were blacklisted in 1940. Notices under Rule 35 of the Jammu and Kashmir Defence Rules were issued to three newspapers in Srinagar to show cause why proceedings should not be taken against them. The Press resented the notices and in a joint statement, Editors of all the newspapers, except "Ranbir", condemned the Government action. Said the Editors:—

"After having failed in maintaining public order, the Government has now cracked down upon the national Press. It seems to have

been frightened by the criticism of its policies and actions offered by the newspapers from time to time. All newspapers had been warned to desist from criticisim and three daily newspapers have been now asked, on the basis of certain news and articles published in their columns, to show cause why action should not be taken against them under the Defence Rules. It seems that the Govèrnment has come to the conclusion that it can no longer continue its policies without gagging the press. It is important to point out that a Government with a State national as Prime Minister and with two popular Ministers in the Cabinet, is resorting to Defence Rules and that too at a time when the War is over and such emergency and extraordinary laws need to be brought to an end. We raise our voice of protest against the undemocratic and tyrannical action of the Government. We feel that public opinion is being suppressed and freedom of press has fallen into jeopardy."

This happened in August, 1945.

The question of press restrictions was raised in the British parliament in September, 1945. A cash security of rupees three thousand demanded from Pandit Bazaz was raised by the paper through donations from its readers but at the same time the order was challenged in the High Court. A Full Bench of the Court decided against the newspaper and an appeal was, therefore, taken to the Board of Judicial Advisers. Mr. Indar Das, a lawyer of great abilities from Jammu appeared on behalf of Pandit Prem Nath Bazaz.

In Srinagar, Muslim journalists formed their own Association in 1946 and affiliated it with the All India Muslim Journalists Association.

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CHAPTER XV

Gopalaswami Ayyengar

Sir N. Gopalaswami Ayyengar, a Madrasi civil servant of great administrative abilities who had spent a life-time in British civil service, took over as Prime Minister in 1936. Mr. Ayyengar, a staunch Congressite at heart, was, however, notorious for his bureaucratic bent of mind. It was no secret that Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, one-time Law member of the Government of India, acted as a private Adviser to Maharaja Hari Singh. Important appointments such as those of the Prime Minister, the Ministers and Judges of the High Court were made generally in consultation with, and upon advice by, him. Sir Sapru, a liberal himself, was very close to Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru for various reasons; apart from the fact that both were Pandits, both originated from Allahabad. Kashmiri Muslims believe that the appointment of Sir Gopalaswami Ayyengar was manipulated by Congress circles through Sir Sapru. There is no direct evidence to support the general belief but there is circumstantial evidence to suggest that after all it may not be a mere conjecture.

The Indian National Congress had accepted the provincial autonomy as embodied in the Government of India Act, 1935. It fought elections as a result of which it was able to form ministries in U.P., Bombay, C.P., Madras, Bihar, Orissa, Assam and N.W.F.P. A pro-Congress Ministry was formed in Sind by Mr. Allah Bakhsh Somroo. In the Punjab, a Unionist Ministry was in power while in Bengal, Mr. Fazl-ul-Haq formed the Government. Whether the Congress desired in its inner thoughts to accept, ultimately, the Central Federation with or without modifications, the attitude of Princely India had already acquired great importance. Pandit Nehru had brought into being an organisation of the inhabitants of Indian States known as the All India States' People's Conference. The idea obviously

was partly to give the Congress an opening into the States and partly to use such opening as a lever against Princes for furtherance of Congress goals. Kashmir, both on account of its strategic placement as well as its being the only Muslim majority State with a Hindu ruler, carried special significance in Congress politics. It is, therefore, possible that on account of these considerations, it did manipulate the appointment of Sir Gopalaswami Ayyengar. Why then, one may ask, did a clash take place between the Ayyengar Government and the Muslim Conference leadership, just at the moment when Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah was preparing for a special session of the Conference to endorse the adoption of the nationalist creed resolution? One of the possible explanations can be that Ayyengar must have already become aware of Maharaja Hari Singh's extreme hatred against Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah and therefore wanted, as a first step, to consolidate his own position in the eyes of his employer by adopting a strong-handed policy towards the Sheikh. After all, the pro-Congress elements had nothing to lose by such a clash because Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah stood publicly committed to the nationalist creed and there could be no retreat from the same.

Sir Gopalaswami Ayyengar had, by his policies, alienated all sections of Muslim public opinion. Being pronouncedly pro-Congress, he remained at war with the pro-Pakistan sections but at the same time, also failed to enlist the support of the Muslim nationalists. Conscious of the fact that Kashmir was a Muslim majority State where any democratization of administration meant putting an end to the unequal and highly disproportionate privileges enjoyed by the Hindus, he considered it necessary to ignore the National Conference in the matter of sharing power. It is also possible that Maharaja Hari Singh's personal hatred of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah as the popular leader who first challenged his absolute authority, may have also been responsible for Ayyengar's broad anti-National Conference policies. Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah is on record to have made scores of strong speeches against the Ayyengar regime. The imposition of the Devanagri script, the exemption of Rajputs from the operation of the Arms Act, the promulgation of the anti-people Constitution in 1939, the greater importance assumed by the Pandits and several other minor measures, which took place during his premiership, in fact widened the gulf between his administration and the National Conference.

Some writers have spoken of an alleged understanding between the two by basing their assumptions on the attitude of the Government towards the clashes that took place between rival supporters of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah and Mir Waiz Yusuf Shah in Srinagar city between

1941 and 1943 and also to the association of Bahkshi Ghulam Mohammad with the Government Fuel Committee and of Mirza Mohammad Afzal Beg with the Food Committee but I have no doubt that the deductions amount to mere kite-flying. It is not true that the Government gave support or protection to pro-National Conference elements in the acts of goondaism. Cases were registered against both the parties but as always happens in mob incidents, they never succeed. Besides, the Government had its own axe to grind. It had no sympathy with either of the groups whose mutual hostility was to its advantage as on both sides it were the Muslims who were shedding each other's blood and greater the bitterness, wider was going to be the gulf between them. To say that Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah and his party could be duped by merely associating its two members with the Food and Fuel problem in the city, is highly uncharitable. The problem was very acute and there was considerable public agitation. National Conference being the dominant political party with the largest following in the city, could not be ignored and it was in the interests of the Government to have associated it with the distribution of fuel and food as by doing so, not only was the wind taken out of its sails but it was put in the dock of public opinion, because, while the procurement and supply remained the exclusive privilege of the Government, the Committees having a representative of the National Conference as a member, dealt only with distribution, the dirtiest part of the job.

It seems that differences ultimately developed between Ayyengar and the Maharaja. Pandit Ram Chandra Kak, who rose from the insignificant post of a librarian to the exalted position of Prime Minister, was an astute Pandit from Srinagar and it can be rightly said that the history of the State's administration from 1937 to 1945 is the history of Ram Chandra Kak's rise to power. He was Chief Secretary of the Government during the later part of Ayyengar's premiership and then became Minister-in-Waiting. In both capacities he had the ears of the Maharaja.

The Quaid-e-Azam was approached by the Muslim Conference circles for removal of Ayyengar on account of his anti-Muslim policies. It is commonly believed that the Quaid-e-Azam did exercise his influence in the matter. The Congress had already launched its Quit India Movement and was sabotaging war efforts; Subash Chandra Bose, an ex-President of the Congress, after having secretly escaped from the sub-continent through the tribal belt near Peshawar where he was received on the railway station by Khan Abdul Hamid Khan later A.K. President, had set up a parallel Government in Singapore and was preparing a Free India Army. The Muslim League, on the contrary, was co-operating with the Government in the successful prosecution of the war. Being the only major political party extending such support, it was quite natural that the Viceroy

could not ignore the demand of the Quaid-e-Azam. It was under these circumstances that Sir Gopalaswami Ayyengar was removed from the post. On his departure on 9th April, 1943, the Muslims observed a Deliverance Day. A part of the Srinagar city was illuminated. "Khidmat" also criticised his policies.

LADY MAHARAJ SINGH DONATES BLOOD FOR A VILLAGE GIRL

He was succeeded by Sir Maharaj Singh, an Indian Christian. A liberal politician, his appointment was, for that reason, welcomed by all sections of Muslims. Raj Kumari Amrit Kaur, the famous inmate of Mahatma Gandhi's Ashram who later became free India's first Health Minister was his sister. Sir Maharaj Singh himself became Governor of Bombay after partition. He had been trained in a different school. He must have naturally known that his predecessor-in-office had been removed at the advice of the Government of India on account of a representation made by the Quaid-e-Azam. He spent most of his time in touring different parts of the State and freely mixed with the people and enquired after their difficulties. He used to move about freely in Srinagar city at odd hours and converse with the meanest of citizens. This was not to the liking of the bureaucrats who began to poison the Maharaja against him. Pandit Bazaz's application for permission to convert his weekly "Hamdard" into a daily had been pending for years but Maharaj Singh granted the requisite permission within 24 hours. Something unheard of, it added to his popular estimation. He dissolved the Fuel and Shali Committees; called a joint meeting in Srinagar of the workers of the National Conference and the Muslim Conference on 17th June and told them either to sink their differences or at least remain peaceful and desist from attacking each other. Within weeks, the popularity of the Prime Minister touched new heights and Muslims became his ardent well-wishers. Deputation after deputation came from remote parts and placed their grievances before him. There were not many restrictions and he saw to it that none was prevented from meeting him. While on the one end, the Maharaja had now definitely turned hostile and his patience seemed to have exhausted, at the other end, Lady Maharaj Singh paid an unannounced visit to the Women's Hospital, Rainawari and donated her blood to save a poor village girl. The news further incensed the already incensed Maharaja; he sent a word to the Prime Minister telling him that he and his wife should not mix too much with the people. Sir Maharaj Singh belonged to the Kapurthala royal house. As a man of honour, he tendered his resignation on 26th July, 1943 and returned to the plains. All sections of people except the Pandits and Dogras, deeply regretted his departure.

He was succeeded by Sir Kailash Narain Haksar. An old stock Kashmiri himself who had been associated with the administration of many States in Rajputana and a former Prime Minister of Bikaneer, the concept of modern democratic rule was not to his liking; he believed in a strong-arm rule in which the people did not count. He had been also a private Constitutional Adviser to the Maharaja; this writer has been told by Lt. Col. Adalat Khan, one-time A.D.C. to the Maharaja that on one of their visits to Rajputana, Haksar tendered some written advice to the Maharaja in connection with the Cripps proposals and was paid for the same.

It was during his premiership that humiliating conditions were imposed for the first time in connection with the holding of the Muslim Conference annual session in Srinagar. Nawab Yar Jang Bahadur, President of the All India States' Muslim League, who arrived in Srinagar, for participation in the said session, was externed within 24 hours of his arrival while Mr. Tushar Kanti Ghosh was not only permitted to enter the State but also allowed to deliver a wholly pro-Congress inaugural address to the Editors' Conference held on 20th August. The daily "Hamdard" was penalised for having discussed the causes and the consequences of the resignation of Sir Maharaj Singh and ordered to deposit a cash security of Rs. 3,000. It was also during his tenure that the food riots already mentioned elsewhere broke out in Jammu city where for the first time since Gulab Singh purchased the State, the Dogras too were slaughtered by the authorities. The Maharaja and the Maharani must have been, naturally, deeply perturbed and it was quite evident that a Prime Minister who had, in a short period, forfeited the confidence of even the traditionally and sentimentally pro-Government Dogras, could no longer be retained in service.

In a search begun for a new Prime Minister, the Maharaja was somehow able to get the services of Sir Benegal Narsing Rao, a Judge of the Calcutta High Court, who was then associated with the Government of India in connection with the examination of the Hindu Law of Inheritance. The resignation of Maharaj Singh only three months after assuming office and the exit of Haksar, had put the new incumbent on guard. B.N. Rao, therefore, did not accept the offer readily and had his own hesitations and reservations. He visited Srinagar and stayed there for a few weeks to take stock of the situation and make up his mind about accepting or rejecting the offer. It took him four months to come to a decision. Ultimately, he took over as Prime Minister on 8th February, 1944, while the Durbar was at Jammu.

Addressing his first press conference in Jammu, Sir B.N. Rao said that he had come with the determination of making Kashmir a model State but when asked to define the term, he was unable to give any precise definition.

He also said that Kashmir was a Hindu State. He was taken to task for it both inside as well as outside the Assembly. He was succeeded by Pandit Ram Chandra Kak on 28th June, 1945.

It will be recalled that on instructions from the National Conference High Command, eight elected members of the State Assembly, belonging to Kashmir valley, had resigned their seats as a protest against the imposition of Devanagri script and the exemption granted to Hindu Rajputs under the Arms Act. The only honourable, just and democratic course open to the Government was to hold bye-elections. A reference to the State Constitution promulgated in 1939 shows that there was no provision at all, for holding of bye-elections in case a seat fell vacant. It seems it was deliberately not provided for in anticipation of such likely resignations, in view of the Government's continued determination to suppress the democratic forces. The Government, despite vehement demands by the National Conference, did not therefore take any steps whatsoever to hold the bye-elections. The explanation offered was that the constitutional Advisers of the Maharaja were of the opinion that the Assembly could function without these seats being filled in. It was, however, forgotten that thirty two lakh Muslims forming 77.1% of the State's population had been allocated only 21 seats in a House of 75 and by keeping these seats vacant, almost half of the Muslim population was left wholly unrepresented. It was also forgotten that these members belonged to Kashmir valley which was practically unrepresented since their resignations. It is interesting to point out that the National Conference was the only Party which vigorously campaigned for bye-elections. The policy of the Muslim Conference was uncertain. Some of them from Srinagar even supported the status quo. The reasons are not far to seek. Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, despite having embraced nationalism, was still the most popular figure in the State and the magic appeal that he had for the illiterate peasantry, though diminished, was still dominant. Ultimately it became embarrassing for the Government to continue to keep the seats vacant especially because the Assembly had been elected originally for three years only and the term had been extended by the Maharaja since June 1941. It appears that one of the reasons that had influenced the National Conference High Command in taking the step was that the life of the Assembly was coming to its end and fresh elections were scheduled to be held a few months later. The Government had a very weak case, if it had any case, at all. It was losing face because it had been extending the life of the legislature since June 1941, while at the same time, politically, the most vocal part of the State was denied representation. However, it manipulated to use the opportunity to its own advantage and to the clear disadvantage of the National Conference. It offered to reseat, through a royal proclamation, the same eight members who had earlier resigned. The advantages for the Government were

firstly to spare itself of the botheration and expense involved in holding elections to so many seats and secondly to put the National Conference in the wrong by prevailing upon it to prefer reseating by the Raja to an election by the people. It is possible that one of the reasons that influenced the Party High Command, to accept the arrangement, was to spare itself the scars and likely dissensions on the question of the distribution of tickets because experience throughout the sub-continent has shown that almost every political worker of note in a constituency is a candidate for the Party ticket. There is, however, no doubt that had the bye-elections been held, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah's nominees would have definitely captured all the seats. Consequently, in the 1942 summer, the Maharaja issued a proclamation reseating the same eight members of the National Conference Assembly Party who had earlier tendered their resignations.

The arrangement was criticised by all democratic forces including the Muslim Conference and by all opponents of the National Conference. Weekly "Hamdard" spear-headed the campaign. The critics said, as they could conveniently say, that had bye-elections been held, the National Conference would have been defeated at the polls; the National Conference was also accused of an anti-people conspiracy. It was thus placed in an embarrassing position for which it had to thank itself.

They were, however, lucky to be able to rehabilitate themselves only two years later when a Muslim seat fell vacant in the constituency of Tral. This time the National Conference insisted upon a bye-election and the Government also agreed. The National Conference nominated Mr. Abdul Ghani Trali, a clerk on the staff of its official organ daily "Khidmat" drawing a monthly salary of Rs. 15/-. The Muslim Conference boycotted the elections and not even a single independent came forward to contest it, with the result that not only was Mr. Abdul Ghani Trali returned unopposed but the claim of the Muslim Conference that if bye-elections had been held to the eight vacant seats in 1942, the National Conference would have been defeated, also withered away. The Muslim Conference gave no explanation for the boycott. The Assembly was extended year after year until the end of 1946. Mr. Trali later became a member of the Indian Upper House.

Sometime after the promulgation of the Constitution in 1939, the Government appointed four persons as Under Secretaries; two were Muslims, Mr. M.A. Hafeez and Sheikh Abdul Hameed. The latter was a nominated member but the former had been elected on the Muslim Conference ticket in 1938. Soon after elections, he abandoned his party

and joined the Government benches and continued to remain so till the end. He had no political service at the time of being awarded the party ticket and was preferred to political workers only because of being an educated person.

Right from Sir Albion Bannerjee in 1929, no Prime Minister enjoyed a really smooth stay and, for one reason or another, they had to leave the State either in disgrace or disgust. It was no doubt largely due to the Maharaja's lust for personal rule but also partly due to the intrigues of the Pandit community who were in virtual control of the administration. Sir Gopalaswami Ayyengar is reported to have told a Muslim colleague at the time of his departure:[1]

> "I have sincerely served the Kashmir Government and strengthened its foundations. I picked up a man from an unimportant post and entrusted to him an important post and then advanced him further, and it is an irony of fate that the same man was responsible for throwing me back and obstructing my work so much that it has become impossible for me to stay on."

It was a reference to Ram Chandra Kak.

Sir Maharaj Singh told an A.P.I. correspondent at the time of his departure:—

> "I had to deal with five senior Prime Ministers and came to know of the Royal Inquiry Commission when its appointment was announced."

These persons, according to what he told Pandit Prem Nath Bazaz, were: Pandit Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, Pandit Sir Kailash Narain Haksar, Pandit Ram Chandra Kak, Pandit Brij Lal Nehru, the Financial Adviser, and Pandit Jalali of the Maharaja's personal secretariat.

NATIONAL CONFERENCE JOINS THE CABINET

Meanwhile, the pro-Pakistan Movement had been gaining ground. By the middle of 1944, it had considerably eroded the National Conference influence in urban areas in the Valley. At the same time, the Congress was very keen to strengthen it so that in view of the likely partition of the sub-continent, the Muslim majority State could at least be "saved" from

1. Javed, 30th November 1944.

going to Pakistan. Shrimati Indira Gandhi, Shrimati Mridula Sarabhai, Seth Sudharshan, Shrimati Krishna Nehru and her husband Mr. Huthee Singh, Professor Kumar Apa of the All India Spinners Association, Mr.K.M. Munshi and a host of other Congress leaders were in Srinagar in the summers of 1943 and 1944. Mr. Brij Lal Nehru, a relative of Pandit Nehru, was already there as Financial Adviser. The circumstantial evidence shows that Congress circles made a serious effort to bring about an understanding between the Maharaja's Government and the National Conference. These efforts were redoubled after the departure of Quaid-e-Azam, the failure of talks for unity between the National Conference and the Muslim Conference and the consequent tension that erupted in their relations.

It was under these circumstances that Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru succeeded in persuading Maharaja Hari Singh to accommodate the National Conference by including two popular Ministers in the Cabinet.

The Maharaja returned from Europe in the second week of July, 1944. The first step considered necessary for bringing about some sort of an understanding was to convince him or at least to persuade him to believe that the National Conference leadership had nothing personal against him and was not opposed to the continuity of his dynasty as constitutional rulers. In pursuance of this policy, the Municipal Committee Srinagar requested the Maharaja to take a round of the city to receive public ovation on his safe return. It was an unusual invitation because the Maharaja had not, since 1931, taken such a round anywhere in the State and even while travelling on the Jhelum Valley or the Banihal roads, despite being heavily escorted, his car sped so fast that nobody was able to catch even a glimpse of the man. Consequently, on 31st July, 1944, he went round the city in a closed car. It is, however, curious to point out that it was not only the National Conference or the Pandits who made hectic preparations for the occasion and decorated the route with flags, buntings, photographs and the like, but that the Muslim Conference was behind no one in its manifestation of loyalty and the Zaina Kadal area, which is traditionally a stronghold of Mir Waiz Mohammad Yusuf Shah, no matter what his political affiliations, had been as beautifully and tastefully decorated as any other place. The Pandits made a display of their finest brocade and China silk. Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah and leaders of the National Conference received the Maharaja outside their headquarters, the Mujahid Manzil. This writer was present and remembers that Hari Singh made no halt but continued his drive. The Prime Minister pointed out Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah who raised his right hand while the Maharaja, in response, gave a slight bend to his head. Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah had flower petals which he showered, symbolically, towards the seat which the

Maharaja was occupying. A worker of the National Conference, Mr. Mohammad Sultan Galladar jumped on the mudguard of the Maharaja's car and went for about two miles in the same position shouting slogans of Maharaja Bahadur Ki Jai, Sher-e-Kashmir Zindabad, Zimadar Nizam-e-Hakumat Zindabad and National Conference Zindabad.

The next step taken by the National Conference was to provide in the New Kashmir pamphlet for the perpetuation of Dogra dynasty as a Constitutional Monarchy. This programme was adopted in Srinagar in September, 1944. In early October, the Maharaja issued a proclamation which was read out in the Assembly then in session in Srinagar announcing his decision to appoint two popular Ministers from amongst the members of the Assembly, one of whom was to be a Muslim and the other, a Hindu. The Assembly was required to elect a panel of six members, three Hindus and three Muslims, and it was for the Maharaja to select any two of them. All members of the Assembly had the right of vote. A meeting of the National Conference General Council was held in Srinagar to consider the announcement. While Maulana Masudi and Bakhshi Ghulam Mohammad pleaded for co-operation and acceptance, Mr. Ghulam Mohammad Sadiq led the opposition demanding rejection of the proposal. Obviously it was a pre-arranged affair as the Party High Command had already tentatively decided to accept the offer. So, by an overwhelming majority, the Council decided to cooperate; Mirza Mohammad Afzal Beg, the Deputy Leader of the Party, was nominated as its candidate.

The Muslim Conference was faced with a difficult position. It had a strong parliamentary group led by a capable parliamentarian, Chaudhry Hameedullah Khan. The Parliamentary group as well as some other elements outside the Assembly Party were very anxious to enter the race. In view of the conflicting opinion, advice was sought from the Quaid-e-Azam, who showed them the light and told them that it was useless to contest the election as in his view the announcement must have been preceded by a secret understanding between the Ruler and the National Conference. The Muslim Conference thereupon decided to boycott the elections.

The Muslims elected were Mirza Mohammad Afzal Beg, Agha Sher Ali, a nominated member and Khawaja Salam Shah who represented Jagirdars. Wazir Ganga Ram of Katra, Reasi was one of those elected from the Hindu qouta.

Criticism was levelled against the National Conference for having ignored the claim of Mian Ahmad Yar, leader of the Parliamentary Party

and to have instead, chosen the Deputy Leader, Mohammad Afzal Beg. The criticism was not wholly unjust. If Mian Ahmed Yar was capable of leading the Parliamentary group for ten years and had never been found wanting in any respect, the honour of representing the party in the Cabinet, was his due. It is true that Beg was decidedly far more intelligent and capable and owed deeper loyalty to the Party leader but that did not justify the supersession of the Party leader. Sheikh Abdullah was lucky that Mian Ahmed Yar had no personal following, otherwise the scars would have perhaps been deep as was the case in Bombay where the Parsi President of the Provincial Congress, Narriman was superseded by B.J. Kher as Prime Minister in the first popular Ministry in 1937. However, Mian Ahmed Yar weakened his own case and blurred his image when only eighteen months later, on Beg's prompt resignation on Party orders, he betrayed the party and joined hands with the Dogra Government to become a "popular" minister in place of Beg. It is pertinent to point out that Mian Ahmed Yar belonged to Jammu, was settled in Muzaffarabad, did not speak Kashmiri and neither his home province nor Muzaffarabad was prepared, in 1938, to send him to the Assembly from any of their constituencies; it was Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah who got him elected from a Kashmiri-speaking constituency in Srinagar, despite the long que of Kashmiri-speaking candidates from Srinagar itself. His defection to the Government benches cannot be defended and in fact it enabled his opponents to say: "Look; We knew he was unreliable. Give us credit for NOT having sent such a man to the Cabinet". At one stage he was a member of the Dogra Sabha and took pride in calling himself Ahmad Yar Khan Dogra. Commenting upon the assumption of office by Mirza Mohammad Afzal Beg, Weekly Javed of Mr. Saghar wrote in its issue, dated 2nd November 1944:

"By creed he is a Muslim Leaguer but by his actions he is a Congressite. He is fully aware of the intentions of Hindus and that is why he considers Pakistan as an article of faith and treats Mr. Jinnah as Quaid-e-Azam".

The Ministers were paid a monthly salary of Rs. 2500/- but the Assembly decided that the popular Ministers would receive Rs. 1600/- only. There were already two Brahmins in the Cabinet, Pandit Ram Chandra Kak, Minister-in-Waiting, and Pandit Anant Ram, Revenue Minister. With the addition of two popular Ministers, the representation of Muslims in the Cabinet came to 25 percent only.

Mirza Mohammad Afzal Beg is a Law graduate from Aligarh. A shrewd politician and a great parliamentarian, he has always remained close to

Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, having given him total loyalty. He comes from a middle class family and has been practising law whenever out of power or jail. Since 1947, he has been universally recognised as the right hand man ofhis leader. He is a fluent speaker in English, Urdu and Kashmiri, his mother tongue. He was given the portfolio of Public Works while Wazir Ganga Ram, a semi-literate Dogra, was given the departments of Home and Education. Thus the dyarchy got an uneasy start, as the National Conference and detached observers of the experiment interpreted the allotment of portfolios as an indication of Hari Singh's unpreparedness to share power with the people.

The summer session of the Assembly began in Srinagar on 22nd October, 1945. Chaudhry Hameedullah Khan moved an adjournment motion seeking to discuss "the grave situation created by the insertion of Hindi words in the educational text books". The motion was disallowed. A second adjournment motion to discuss the "growing ill-treatment of Muslims since coming into power of Pandit Ram Chandra Kak" was also disallowed. Mian Ahmad Yar, leader of the National Conference Assembly Party, then moved a resolution demanding that ninety percent profit from the Silk Factory Srinagar be distributed amongst its workers. Chaudhry Hameedullah Khan and Qazi Abdul Ghani Delinah extended their whole-hearted support. The resolution was strongly opposed by the Prime Minister and was, therefore, withdrawn. As all resolutions and adjournment motions were rejected by the Chair, members of both the parties staged a walk-out in protest.

CH. HAMEEDULLAH KHAN

After the split in the Muslim Conference Assembly Party on account of the conversion of the Party into National Conference, some members who did not wish to associate themselves with the latter, formed into a separate group known as "The Zamindara Group" with Ch. Hameedullah Khan as its leader. After the revival of the Muslim Conference, it was named the "Muslim Conference Assembly Party"; Chaudhry Hameedullah Khan continued to be its Leader. He was the son of Chaudhry Khushi Mohammad Nazir from Gujrat, who joined Kashmir Civil Service quite early in his career and ultimately retired as its Revenue Minister. "Nazir" is reported on all hands to have been a conscientious officer who sometimes travelled incognito to check the normal office working and detect red tape and corruption in his department. However, he was a loyal and dedicated supporter of the Dogra House and is remembered in a Punjabi satirical verse as having been one of its four pillars. "Nazir" is remembered all

over the Urdu-speaking world for his beautiful poems, the most famous being one captioned "Jogi". During his later years he purchased a small house in Baramula and temporarily settled there. Chaudhry Hameedullah Khan was a Law graduate from Aligarh and joined politics soon after starting practice at Jammu. A good speaker in English, Urdu and Punjabi, he proved his worth as a parliamentarian. He was very courageous and never faltered where Muslim interests were in danger. His speeches had also a touch of humour. Unfortunately, he died while still in his late forties.

When the Assembly met for its summer session in Srinagar on 16th September, 1946, after the Quit Kashmir Movement, Chaudhry Hameedullah Khan moved an adjournment motion seeking to discuss the rumour that the Prime Minister had assured Sardar Patel that the Government would take steps to prevent the strengthening of the Pakistan Movement. The allegation was promptly denied. He then moved another adjournment motion seeking to discuss the death of two Kashmiri political workers from Srinagar in Jammu jail. He condemned the Government for keeping political prisoners from Kashmir valley, accustomed to a cool climate, in a hot place like Jammu. Khawaja Mohammad Khalil Kitchlu, a prominent member of the Assembly from Bhadarwah, whose role in the Legislature was next only to Mirza Mohammad Afzal Beg and Chaudhry Hameedullah Khan, then moved an adjournment motion seeking to raise a discussion on the transfer of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah to the notorious snake-infested Reasi jail, his hunger strike and the maltreatment allegedly meted out to him. The permission was refused.

In September, the Maharaja granted one month's pay as gratuity to thousands of army as well as civil employees who had been employed in suppressing the Quit Kashmir Movement. The official announcement praised them for the restoration of law and order. Chaudhry Hameedullah Khan moved an adjournment motion in the same session to raise a discussion on the grant of the gratuity but the permission was refused as it was opposed by the Chief Secretary Chaudhry Niaz Ahmad Khan on the ground that as the order had originated from the Ruler, its discussion was outside the powers of the Assembly. In his speech, Chaudhry Hameedullah regretted that Magistrates, armed soldiers and constables had been rewarded for killing innocent Muslims. The Party walked out in protest. The two members of the National Conference Assembly Party who were attending the session also followed the lead.

The Assembly was dissolved after the session and a new one elected in January, 1947.

The National Conference leadership was in jail. Chaudhri Ghulam Abbas Khan, President of the Muslim Conference, Mr. A.R. Saghar, Agha Shaukat Ali, General Secretary of the Party and Maulvi Noor-ud-Din, Chairman of the Party's Action Committee and a brother-in-law of Mir Waiz Mohammad Yusuf Shah, were also behind bars. The National Conference decided to boycott the elections. The Muslim Conference contested some of the seats only. In Kashmir valley it did not award any tickets except in the constituency of Sopore where its candidate Khawaja Ghulam Mohi-ud-Din Darzi was defeated by an independent. Muslim Conference workers or sympathizers did file nomination papers and in view of the boycott by the National Conference, no votes were cast in most of the constituencies, in Kashmir valley. Some of the members who were returned from Muslim seats formed an M.C. Parliamentary group with Chaudhry Hameedullah Khan as leader and Khawaja Ghulam Ahmed Jeweller from Srinagar as Deputy Leader. Some of those returned to this Assembly were as follows:—

1. Chaudhry Hameedulah Khan;
2. Chaudhry Ghulam Mustafa, Jammu district;
3. Chaudhry Mohammad Yusuf, Mirpur;
4. Sardar Mohammad Ibrahim Khan, Poonch;
5. Sardar Yar Mohammad Khan, Poonch;
6. Chaudhry Khurshid Ahmad, Bhimber;
7. Mirza Mohammad Hussain, Reasi;
8. Khawaja Ghulam Ahmad Jeweller, Srinagar;
9. Khawaja Abdul Ghani Ganai, Srinagar;
10. Khawaja Ghulam Nabi Gilkar, Srinagar;
11. Khawaja Inayatullah Kakru, Baramula;
12. Mian Ahmad Yar, Muzaffarabad;
13. Khawaja Habibullah Faktoo, Sopore.

"The State Peoples Party" floated on the eve of elections by Premier Kak, was also able, due to NC boycott, to capture some seats in the Valley. Chaudhry Khurshid Ahmad, the son of Chaudhry Niaz Ahmed, Chief Secretary to the Government and a close relative of Chaudhry Hameedullah Khan, opposed the Muslim Conference candidate Raja Mohammad Yaqub Khan until recently a Deputy Secretary General of the Azad Kashmir Government. Nominally an independent, he actually fought the election in the name of a Gujar-Jat platform. Returned to the Assembly, he sat on the Government benches. Mian Ahmed Yar Khan, the P.W.D. Minister was 'elected' unopposed as the nomination papers of all his rivals were illegally rejected. Two elected members, Pandit Janki Nath Bhat from Shopian and Mr. Yar Mohammad Khan from Poonch, Advocates, later rose to be Judges of the High Courts on their side of the Cease-fire line.

When after the outbreak of the war, the Indian National Congress resigned offices in the provinces as a protest against Indian participation without prior consultation with it, the National Conference had in a resolution endorsed the Congress stand though it did not pursue any active policy and took no steps either to assist or impede war efforts. By the middle of 1942, the Communist lobby had become so powerful that it was under their influence that contrary to the Congress stand on war, it adopted the policy of the Indian Communist Party. This shocked Congress circles and there was bitter criticism of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah in the columns of the Congress and pro-Congress press. The growth of the Pakistan Movement, however, compelled them to swallow the bitterness and increase their efforts to again humour him. On the arrest of Congress leaders in connection with the "Quit India Movement", the National Conference observed a hartal in Srinagar on 23rd August, 1942 and held a protest meeting in the evening.

HINDU MILITANTS BETRAY THEIR PLANS

It has been already recorded that Hindus and Sikhs kept themselves aloof from the National Conference. Of the few individuals who joined the Party, some left it soon afterwards. Among them was Pandit Jia Lal Killam, a very capable jurist from Srinagar. After his resignation from the National Conference, he was elected President of the Sanatan Dharam Yovak Sabha, the rabid anti-Muslim platform of Kashmiri Pandits. What a fall! The non-Muslims continued to owe their allegiance to their communal organisations. The most vocal among them was the Hindu

Rajya Sabha which advocated, publicly, the conversion of Muslims and the establishment of an orthodox Hindu Raj. Their attitude may be judged from two incidents only: In the first one, a Christian who had years ago embraced Christianity from his original Hindu faith was reconverted to Hinduism. A big function was held at Shital Nath Srinagar on 6th July, 1941 to solemnise, as a national festival, his reconversion. The incident was also given wide publicity by Hindu press accompanied by inflammatory articles against other faiths and their followers. The next incident took place in Jammu in 1942 when a Dogra girl, Anar Devi, embraced Islam alongwith her father and took the Muslim name of Sakina Bibi. She married a Muslim constable. She was an educated girl and had been working as a teachress. Three weeks after her conversion, when accompanied by her father to the State treasury to collect her pay, she was attacked by a crowd of Hindus and forcibly carried away. On the intervention of Muslims, the Government was forced to register a case and recovered her from the house of Col. Sansar Singh. She was produced before a Magistrate who despite her being a major (she was 22 years old), forcibly handed her over to the Hindus. She told the Magistrate emphatically that she had embraced Islam out of her own free will, and that she feared for her life at their hands. After being handed over to the Hindus, the poor creature disappeared. Muslims resorted to hartals and public meetings to condemn the high handed and illegal action of the Magistrate and demanded her recovery. There was no response. It was clear that the girl had been murdered at the instance of at least a section of the leading Dogras.

In clear contrast to this aggressive and blood-thirsty attitude of Hindus, one may cite the instance of the daughter of a Muslim vegetable-grower from Udhampur town, who was seduced by a member of the R.S.S. gang, converted to Hinduism and married under the auspices of the local Arya Samaj branch. The Muslims did not react sharply and kept their heads cool. At that time there were posted in Udhampur a few Muslim officers and other Government servants who could think beyond their immediate interests. Among them was Agha Shaukat Ali, who was working as Tehsildar, Doctor Haroon-ur-Rashid son of Maulvi Mohammad Abdullah, Advocate, one of the founding-fathers of the liberation movement, Mr. Allah Rakha Butt better known as "Zar Butt", Cashier of the local P.W.D., Mr. Inayat, Overseer, later a Superintending Engineer in Azad Kashmir, his father-in-law B. Roshan Din and one Mr. Nisar Ahmad, a Sanitary Inspector. They did considerable spade-work among local Muslims and set up a Seerat Committee with the ostensible purpose of imparting religious education but in fact to organise them politically and to prevent further inroads by the Sanghis. They were very ably assisted by Master Abdul Ghaffar, Member

Town Area Committee, Khawaja Abdus Subhan, Khawaja Mohammad Dar, Khawaja Samad Joo, Khawaja Aziz Joo and Jamedar (later Lt.) Noor Mohammad. They repaired the main mosque built by Wazir Hashmatullah Khan, and also set up a Reading Room. They were able to prevent further inroads by the Sanghis and the Arya Samajists.

The usual pattern followed by Hindu political parties was to praise the Maharaja and his dynasty, to condemn Islam, to distort Muslim history by representing Muslim rulers as oppressors of Hindus and terrorise Muslims living in isolated pockets. The extent to which they could go may be judged from the fact that in a meeting of Hindu ladies held in Rajouri in May, 1941, one Krishna Devi advised her Hindu sisters not to employ Muslim midwives because, she told them, "as soon as a child was born at their hands, they were apt to say "Bismillah" and this is how Islamic teachings began to be dinned into their ears from the very moment of their birth."[1]

Since 1941 the Rajya Sabha had launched a public campaign through press and platform for the social and economic boycott of Muslims. Hindus were called upon:

1. Not to purchase anything from Muslims selling gun powder;
2. To boycott Muslim butchers;
3. To boycott such Hindu lawyers who did not subscribe to the membership of the Rajya Sabha; and
4. To boycott such newspapers which did not support the Sabha.

Mahasha Khushal Chand Khursand, a leading Hindu leader and journalist from Lahore, visited Srinagar in October, 1941. Addressing a meeting of Hindus, he said:—

> "Hindus should make every possible sacrifice for the protection of cow and the Hindi script. Hindu lawyers should dismiss from service Urdu knowing clerks and appoint in their place, Hindi-knowing clerks only. They should also write down all applications in connection with their Court work in Hindi. No one living in India has a right to call himself a Muslim or a Christian or a Sikh; all persons living in India should be called Hindus just as people living in Iran are called Iranis".

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1. Al-Islah, June, 1941.

A Sikh political conference was held in Baramula in June, 1941. In his presidential address, Sardar Sant Singh, Secretary of the Congress Parliamentary Party in the Central Assembly made a virulent attack on a number of Muslim rulers. The conference demanded exemption from Arms Act, better representation in Services, the setting up of a responsible Government and arrangements for teaching Gurmukhi in schools.

Kanwar Chand Kiran Sharda, a leading member of the Rajya Sabha, addressing a public meeting in Nowshehra in June, 1944, said:

"I want to tell those Hindus who have joined the National Conference that Kashmir Raj belongs to Hindus and they have acquired it by force of arms. It is not possible for us to mix with people who say their prayers five times a day by looking towards Kaaba. The Hindus of the State should not think that they are alone. The 75% population of India consisting of Hindus is behind you. Kashmir is the tilak of Bharatmata's face. Our country is one and indivisible. We shall not allow it to be partitioned into Pakistan and Hindustan. Those who will try to break the country into pieces shall be broken into pieces by us".

Addressing a meeting of Hindus held in Jammu under the auspices of the Rajya Sabha, Mr. Desh Pande, a member of the Central Assembly and leader of the Hindu Mahasabha, said:—

"The basis of Hindu Raj is Hindu Dharma. Therefore, we hope that Hindus will be able to establish Hindu Raj in India. I also hope that the Maharaja of Kashmir and the Hindus of the State will be able to maintain Hindu Raj in the State. Mr. Jinnah is a very clever and competent lawyer. When he threatens civil war, Gandhi ji is frightened. Mr. Jinnah should remember that we shall shed streams of blood to keep India united. *We want that there should be an ideal Hindu Raj in the State and it should command an army which would be on our side in our war against the internal and external enemies of India. Hindus of India expect that the State army will be fully armed to defend the unity of India.*"[1]

Mr. N.C. Chatterji, President of the Bengal Hindu Provincial Mahasabha, said in his speech on the same day:—

"So far as the theory of two nations is concerned, in Kashmir we have nowhere seen two nations. The issue of Pakistan has been raised

1. Weekly Javed, 2nd November, 1944.

only to maintain British imperialism. Here you have Hindu Raj. It is the Education department and the administration which is creating trouble over here. I have met the Prime Minister and apprised him about the need for Hindi."

The Hindu Rajya Sabha held its seventh annual session in Rajouri in May, 1944, under the presidentship of Chaudhri Ram Lal. In his presidential address, he said that Kashmir was the soul of the Aryan culture *and that Ranbir Singh was the first in the sub-continent to have started the Shudhi movement.* He made a highly inflammatory speech. The 8th annual session of the Sabha was held at Muzaffarabad on 19th, 20th and 21st May, 1945. Doctor Moonje performed the flag hoisting ceremony.

Addressing the session, Doctor Dev, President of the All India States Hindu Sabha, said:—

"India is bleeding at the moment but is nevertheless united. The day is not far off when Hindus will rule a united India. British India and Indian India are one; it is essential for them to be united. It is a Hindu State".

In his presidential address, Mr. Vaishnu Gupta said:—

"Hindu religion is the best religion in the world. Hindu philosophy is similarly the best philosophy in the world; *Hindu civilisation is the noblest civilisation and Hindu blood is more pious and precious than every other blood anywhere in the world. A Hindu who feels like that can never feel proud in joining hands with those who are inferior to them. Hindu can grant protection to others; he can be good to them and can take them under his protection but he cannot enter into any agreement with them which may place them on an equal footing.*"[1]

The District Magistrate Muzaffarabad sent his car to the border post at Kohala to bring Doctors Moonje and Dev to Muzaffarabad. All Hindu officers posted in the district helped in the preparations of the conference. When these speeches were reported in the press, Muslims protested from one end of the State to the other. Even the National Conference leadership and its official organ "Khidmat" reacted very sharply but the Government immediately clamped Rule 50 of the Kashmir Defence Rules, prohibiting the holding of meetings or taking out of processions. However, Mr. Gupta was externed from Srinagar on 20th July, 1945. No doubt was left in the mind of any honest observer that the Sabha had its patrons right inside the Dogra ruling family.

1 Al-Islah, June 1941.

The Rajya Hindu Sabha was later named Praja Parishad with Pandit Prem Nath Dogra as its leader. By the time of partition, the military wing of the All India Hindu Mahasabha, the R.S.S. had started its activities inside the State on a large scale. Publicly it held P.T. shows, but secretly it imparted training in the preparation of home-made bombs, use of explosives and fire arms. In 1946 a parcel of long knives was caught by Muslim employees of the Customs Department. It had been sent from outside the State to another wing of the Rajya Sabha, the Mahavir Dal. The matter was hushed up and no action was taken against the importers.

THE HARIJANS' PLIGHT

The Harijans constituted almost half of the non-Muslim population in the State. There was hardly a town where they did not have a locality of their own. However, their number was considerable in certain parts of Jammu province. They were ill-treated as is customary with caste Hindus. Their condition may be judged from the following speech delivered by Mr. Jagat Ram Aryan, who represented them in the State Assembly. Addressing the Assembly on 21st September, 1938, he said:—

> "I want to submit that Harijans are Hindus and Hinduism should be proud that Harijans call themselves Hindus. I have a grievance against my Hindu brethren. They proclaim their superior merit and talk of the virtues of Hinduism to the outside world but they do not disclose, at the same time, that there is a community among them, which is suffering at their hands and whose children long even for a drop of water. They are not treated as human beings. I want to submit that the high-handedness of the Hindus has assumed such proportions that we have to seek Government help to be able to use water from public wells and tanks and have to compel the Government to enact it as a law. I would say that this law will be a blot on the Jammu people, because it is necessitated by the hardships suffered by the women and children of this backward community. There is a section among Hindus who are meting out unfair treatment to us and we are tolerating it.
>
> *We are precluded from using a single drop of water which is given by God. We demand our rights but do not beg as a charity. Civilised governments side with the poor, but the Government here helps the oppressors. The oppressors here are so cruel that our children are thirsty for a single drop of water. They follow Manusmriti, which was*

written by a mad man. This book has been the cause of our degradation. Our women have to comb the jungles in search of water.

At the time of the distribution of scholarships to our children, the boys of other communities say, with tears in eyes, that Harijan boys are also given scholarships and resent the urge for education, among our boys. When there is a classification in the Middle and High schools, the scholarships are also classified. If there is no deserving student in one section, the scholarship is not transferred to another section and even if there is a deserving person in the other section, it is refused to him. Similarly a scholarship allotted to the other section is refused to a boy of the third section. Ultimately it lapses.

All influential Hindus appoint their own relatives in their Departments. The Governor of Jammu has filled all departments under him with his relatives and other Hindus. But alas! he did not employ even one Harijan".[1]

Mr. Aryan cited three instancss in the Education department alone: A Harijan started a primary school at Jammu. Efforts were made by caste Hindus in the department to deprive him of Government aid on the excuse that an Urdu school already existed in the locality. Another Harijan opened a school in Kathua and again aid was sought to be refused on the ground that a Government school was already in existence in the locality. A Harijan woman passed high proficiency examination in Hindi. She belonged to Jammu but was appointed at Muzaffarabad, hundreds of miles away. The poor lady had to resign her job.

To protect their interests, the Harijans floated a political party of their own named "The All Jammu and Kashmir Megh Mandal". The seventh annual session of the Mandal was held at Ranbirsinghpura towards the end of June, 1946. Presenting his address of welcome, Bhagat Chhajo Ram, President of the Reception Committee, said:

"Harijans have been placing their demands before the Government now for a very long time but, on its part, the Government has turned a deaf ear and there has been no slowing down in the unbroken chain of the injustices perpetrated upon us."

Bhagat Mangat Ram, President of the Mandal said in his presidential address:

"Harijans can no longer tolerate the innumerable tyrannies inflicted by the caste Hindus. How can Harijans adopt a society and a

1. Praja Sabha Reports, September 1938.

religion in which there is no respectable place for them? Caste Hindus do not treat them as human beings. Four lakh Harijans have been given only two seats in the Assembly which is a glaring injustice. The caste Hindus, instead of representing their point of view, in fact try to prevent it from being placed before the House. *When it is a question of acquisition of rights, the caste Hindus treat us as a part of the Hindu community but when it comes to Government services, we are totally ignored and they appropriate the entire share.* Harijans are suffering under Hindu landlords in the same way as serfs of Europe suffered under the landed aristocracy. *The caste system and the concept of untouchability has so destroyed us that we begin to retrace our steps as soon as we catch the glimpse of a Brahmin. We are forbidden from taking water or even going near the wells of caste Hindus who have the religious duty of giving water to the dead and milk to the serpents. So long as we are Harijans we cannot acquire even basic human rights but the moment we accept Islam, we can use not only their wells but also acquire full civil status. Hindus call themselves nationalists but I cannot help saying that there is no one in the world who is so bigoted as caste Hindus. It was this untouchability with the Muslims that compelled them to demand Pakistan because they thought that it was not possible to live with such Hindus.*"

CH. GHULAM ABBAS RETURNS

Let us now revert back to the reorganisation of the Muslim Conference. It has been already noted that large sections of Muslims were unhappy with the change of the party name, but as no effective leadership was available, there were no concrete results. The most effective opposition to National Conference was offered by Mir Waiz Mohammad Yusuf Shah, not necessarily because of any ideological differences but because of his personal animosity towards Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah. Qureshi Mohammad Yusuf, a courageous, sincere and hard working political worker from Srinagar, who had the courage of conviction to oppose the renaming of the Party, had drawn closer to Mir Waiz Sahib and was in constant touch with such members of the Legislature who, like him, did not support the change of the party name. After the resignation of Chaudhri Ghulam Abbas from the National Conference, the chances of the rebirth of the Muslim Conference looked brighter and Qureshi Mohammad Yusuf immediately got in regular touch with him. Consequently, in February, 1942, Chaudhri Ghulam Abbas issued the following statement:—

"I have no hesitation or doubt in issuing this statement. In any sphere of activity, whenever a step is taken, it is difficult to retrace it and it is

all the more so in politics but it is also necessary in politics that there should be no delay in bringing about changes. The setting up of the National Conference in place of the Muslim Conference has proved to have been a great mistake. Without getting any support from non-Muslims, the new organisation steadily lost Muslim support which has resulted in great damage. Political progress has abruptly stopped and the Government has strengthened its position; international relations are tense and in this field new dangerous questions have arisen. Muslim demands are being trampled under. Their language, culture and even existence is in such danger as it was never before. The National Conference has taken no steps for the realisation of their just demands. The democratic front has broken and all that now remains is just a name. Public voice has become weak and nobody pays any heed to it. The only course left open now is to organise public opinion and this can be done only by strengthening the Muslim Conference. I know it is a difficult task but after due consideration I have come to the conclusion that the time was opportune. I, therefore, appeal to everyone to strengthen the Muslim Conference which has the same aims and objectives as before, namely, constitutional reforms for the attainment of responsible Government and equal rights and opportunities for all communities."

At a meeting of the political workers who had dissociated themselves from the National Conference, held at Jammu on 5th February, 1942, at the residence of Chaudhri Ghulam Abbas Khan, it was decided to convene a special session within two months to revive the Party. The session was held in Ghazi Camp Jammu on 17th, 18th and 19th April, 1942. Chaudhry Abdullah Khan Bhalli was Chairman of the Reception Committee. Maulana Zafar Ali Khan of daily "Zamindar" Lahore and a front-rank Muslim League leader performed the flag hoisting ceremony. He also inaugurated the Conference which was presided over by Chaudhri Ghulam Abbas Khan. In a resolution the Conference recorded its disapproval of the statement issued by Sir Gopalaswami Ayyengar in the State Assembly on 4th April pledging the State Government's full support to the Cripps Plan for a united India. The resolution further recorded the State Muslims full support to the demand for Pakistan. The Conference demanded withdrawal of the Devanagri script and amendment of the Arms Act. The Conference also condemned the cow-killing provision in the Penal Code and demanded its repeal. The Conference further demanded removal of Sir Gopalaswami Ayyengar. After highlighting the anti-Muslim policies of the Government, Chaudhri Ghulam Abbas Khan said:—

"In this connection I would like to address a few words to my respected friend Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah and would like to tell him that despite your honest endeavours that non-Muslims may join you in the struggle for freedom, they have declined to do so and a few of them who followed, have also abandoned you in the midst of stormy waters and have also torn the sails of our boat. To expect loyalty or co-operation from them is useless. Please forget them because they are helpless and join hands with us so that we could jointly take some decision about our future."

Chaudhri Ghulam Abbas issued an appeal in May for funds so that the reorganisation of the Party could be effectively carried out. In Srinagar, a committee consisting of Qureshi Mohammad Yusuf as President, Nizam-ud-Din Chishti as Secretary, Master Ghulam Rasool and Mr. M.A. Sabir as members, was set up to organise the new party. Maulana Mirak Shah was nominated Senior Vice-President and Mr. A.R. Saghar General Secretary. Chaudhri Ghulam Abbas Khan and Mr. Saghar visited Poonch, Mirpur and Kotli in connection with the reorganisation work and explained the reasons for having supported the formation of the National Conference and those that led to their subsequent resignation and the revival of the Muslim Conference. The Muslim Conference Working Committee met in Srinagar, for the first time after 1939, on 19th, 20th and 21st September, 1942. The Committee condemned the Quit India Movement as aiming at the establishment of Hindu Raj. It also passed resolutions pertaining to local affairs. A public meeting was held in Zaindar Mohalla which was addressed by Chaudhry Hameedullah Khan and Qureshi Mohammad Yusuf. It was the first public meeting held under the auspices of the party after its revival.

The next annual session of the Party was held in Srinagar on 13th and 14th August, 1943, under the presidentship of Chaudhri Ghulam Abbas Khan.

NAWAB YAR JANG IN SRINAGAR

Nawab Bahadur Yar Jang, President of the All India States Muslim League and a front rank leader of the All India Muslim League had been invited to attend the session. He had, about a month in advance, publicly accepted the invitation. Sir Kailash Narain Haksar imposed humiliating conditions on the holding of the session. For instance, taking out of the traditional procession was disallowed; another condition was that nobody from outside the State could participate and yet another one was that no reference could be made to political matters of all-India importance. The Muslim Conference even accepted these terms because it wanted to avoid a clash at a time when its reorganisation was

still in its infancy. Nawab Bahadur Yar Jang accompanied by his wife, reached Srinagar a few days before the session. Soon after arrival, he was served with a notice declaring him a persona non grata and requiring him to leave the State within twenty-four hours. In a letter to the Prime Minister, he offered to abstain from making any speech but at the same time stating that he would participate in the session as an observer. It was not even acknowledged by the haughty bureaucrat. He was required to board a Government vehicle and dropped across the Kohala bridge. Even his wife was not permitted to accompany him. The lady had to leave in a private transport to join her husband. The Government even hadn't the courtesy to provide the Nawab with a transport upto Rawalpindi, the first major city after Srinagar, and he had to make his own travel arrangements from Kohala. This treatment, ill-conceived, thoughtless and highly provocative as it was, naturally hurt all sections of Muslims irrespective of their political affiliations and the discrimination could be seen in its nakedity when only a few weeks later, an outside organisation, the All India Newspapers Editors Conference, was not only permitted to meet in Srinagar but its President Mr. Tushar Kanti Ghosh was also permitted to make a pro-Congress speech in the meeting.

It appears that the entry of Nawab Bahadur Yar Jang had been already banned and the police post at Kohala duly intimated. Nawab Sahib reached Kohala unscheduled and entered his name as Yar Jang because he had already renounced the Nizam-conferred, Nawab Bahadur, title. The police officer on duty did not have his photograph and as the name of the visitor did not tally with the man mentioned in the Government order, he let him proceed to Srinagar. On reaching there, he was surprised to find not even a soul to receive him. So he telephoned Mir-Waiz Manzil and was promptly taken to the house.[1]

1. As recounted to this writer by Mr. K.H. Khurshid.

[illegible] its "infancy". Nawab Bahadur Yar Jang accompanied by his wife, reached Srinagar a few days before the session. Soon after arrival, he was served with a notice curtailing his personal freedom and requiring him to leave the State within twenty-four hours. In a letter to the Prime Minister, he offered to abstain from making any speech but at the same time stating that he would participate in the session as an observer. It was not even acknowledged by the haughty bureaucrat. He was required to board a Government vehicle and dropped across the Kohala bridge. Even his wife was not permitted to accompany him. The lady had to leave in a private transport to join her husband. The Government even hadn't the courtesy to provide the Nawab with a transport upto Rawalpindi, the first major city after Srinagar, and he had to make his own travel arrangements from Kohala. This treatment, ill-conceived, thoughtless and highly provocative as it was, naturally hurt all sections of Muslims, irrespective of their political affiliations and the discrimination could be seen in its nakedness when only a few weeks later, an outside organisation, the All India Newspapers Editors Conference, was not only permitted to meet in Srinagar but its President Mr. Tushar Kanti Ghosh was also permitted to make a pro-Congress speech in the meeting.

It happens that the entry of Nawab Bahadur Yar Jang had been already banned and the police post at Kohala duly intimated. Nawab Sahib reached Kohala unscheduled and entered his name as Yar Jang because he had already renounced the Nizam-conferred, Nawab Bahadur, title. The police officer on duty did not have his photograph and as the name of the visitor did not tally with the man mentioned in the Government order, he let him proceed to Srinagar. On reaching there, he was surprised to find not a single soul to receive him. So he telephoned Mir Waiz Hamdani and was promptly taken to the house.[1]

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1. As narrated to this writer by Mr. K.H. Khundmiri.

CHAPTER INDEX

QUAID-E-AZAM IN KASHMIR

CHAPTER XVI

Quaid-e-Azam in Kashmir

BACKGROUND OF SH. ABDULLAH'S INVITATION

Thus we enter 1944, a year of great historical significance. In the sub-continent itself, the All India Muslim League had moved from strength to strength. The demand for Pakistan had fired the imagination of the Muslims of all classes and resulted in bringing about an unprecedented awareness of their national identity. While there was no doubt that the sub-continent's freedom was no longer a distant dream, it had also become clear that whatever the scheme for its freedom, Muslim League's prior agreement was going to be a pre-condition. In the State itself, the National Conference was still the biggest and the best organised political party. In Kashmir valley, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah's nationalism was no doubt running in trouble in such parts of Srinagar city, which were under the influence of Mir Waiz Mohammad Yusuf Shah and with the educated Muslims everywhere else. The opposition from Mir Waiz was considered inevitable but the educated Muslim middle-class was undeniably influenced by the Muslim League ideology and the Congress-League confrontation. They were naturally apt to look at things from an All India angle and considered the local politics as of little significance. This, however, did not affect Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah's personal standing with the mass of peasantry and the urbanites. What he had done for them since 1931 and the way he had personally suffered for their greater good, could not be obliterated from their minds. His highly-trained band of workers was always there to remind them of these facts. It was, therefore, difficult to persuade them to believe that a man with such a background did not wish for their betterment. Frankly speaking, it cut no ice with masses. On the other hand, the opposition of Mir Waiz was interpreted as being strictly personal and vindictive while the disen-

chantment of the educated Muslim middle class was effectively represented as the voice of those who wanted services and promotions at the cost of sufferings by the masses.

In Jammu province, the position of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah and his party was not so enviable. As a large number of Muslims spoke Punjabi, they were culturally a part of Muslim Punjab. Travel between Jammu and Punjab was more frequent; the over-all result was that political climate of the land of five rivers had a direct impact on the political climate in large parts of Jammu province. As the comparative number of Hindus in the province was far larger than in Kashmir valley, the Hindu-Muslim question was naturally more acute here. The change of the party name in 1939 did not, therefore, evoke a favourable response. By the end of 1941, hardly any Hindu of any consequence remained in the National Conference. The result was that although Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah continued to command personal respect and even influence at numerous places, the National Conference could not make any effective impact. In Mirpur, Ghazi Elahi Bakhsh who had suffered most in connection with the political movement since 1931 and spent the best part of his youth in jail, had kept aloof from the National Conference. In Rajouri, Mirza Faqir Mohammad and other members of the National Conference tendered their resignations en bloc and joined the Muslim Conference. Syed Nazir Hussain Shah who started practice in Poonch in 1937, had immediately plunged himself into politics and with the help and co-operation of other workers, notably, Mr. Butt, Feroze Ali Khan, Abdur Rahim Durrani, Mohammad Hussain and later, Behram Khan and Maulana Ghulam Haider Jandalvi, brought about a reorganisation of the party in the district.

It was in this background that in early 1944 Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah after consultations with his colleagues, such as Mirza Mohammad Afzal Beg, Maulana Mohammad Saeed Masudi, Khawaja Ghulam Mohammad Sadiq and Bakhshi Ghulam Mohammad, decided to invite the Quaid-e-Azam to Srinagar to bring about a compromise between the National Conference and the Muslim Conference. Khawaja Ghulam Mohammad Sadiq and Maulana Saeed thereupon met the Quaid-e-Azam at Delhi. This was followed by a long meeting between Quaid-e-Azam and Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah. The Sheikh's representatives again met him at Lahore. What discussions took place in the meeting, is not known but Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah told a group of workers, (this writer was present) that the first thing he told the Quaid was that he was the leader of an independent organisation and had come to see him in that capacity. He invited the Quaid-e-Azam to Srinagar. It appears that the Quaid-e Azam also had a standing invitation from the Muslim Conference.

......IN THE TWENTIES

It is not definitely known as to how many times did Kashmir lure the Quaid-e-Azam or more aptly, did his august presence honour it. It is known that he had been going to Hill stations during summer and it is, therefore, very likely that he may have visited Kashmir even before late twenties when we have definite evidence of his visit. It is only after going through his personal papers and conducting pains-taking research in Srinagar, Gulmarg and Pahalgam that it could be definitely ascertained as to how many visits had taken place and which was the first one. On his first visit, he was accompanied by his wife, Rattanbhai, who died in 1929. The visit which thus took place before 1929 (perhaps between 1925 and 1928) was arranged through the internationally known travel Agency, Thomas Cook. The Quaid-e-Azam arrived in Rawalpindi from Bombay at 3.45 p.m. by the Frontier Mail. His wife had preceded him by about two weeks.

The Quaid-e-Azam stayed overnight in the Flashman Hotel. Mr. Michael, an Anglo-Indian who was the Manager of the "British Army Motor Service" and the "Wireless Motor Company" Rawalpindi with Agha Ghulam Jilani and his uncle Mian Mohammad Shafi as proprietors, showed him the entire fleet of the Company's passenger cars but not one could find favour with the impeccable Barrister from Bombay. He then showed him, without the prior permission of the owner, the personal Buick of Agha Ghulam Jilani, recently purchased from a staff-member of the Viceroy. Mr. Jinnah approved it and this is how Agha Ghulam Jilani had the unique privilege, now proudly treasured in the family chronicle, of driving the Quaid-e-Azam from Rawalpindi to Srinagar. One Khan Mohammad Afghani was picked as a substitute driver.

Agha Ghulam Jilani fondly recollects the journey and told this writer that the Quaid-e-Azam did not speak to him but engrossed himself in a book and occasionally lighted a cigar. When the car came to a halt at the Domel Custom post, Agha Sahib still remembers that the Quaid-e-Azam asked: "What is wrong?" He was told that it being a Custom post, the luggage had to be checked which was allowed. The first halt came about 15 miles away at Garhi Dupatta. After lunch, he came out of the room and with hands on his back, took a few strolls in the verandah; then pronouncing, "Ready", he took his seat in the car. From here to Srinagar, there was no halt. On reaching their office in Srinagar, the substitute driver, Khan Mohammad took him to his destination, the residence of Pestonjis where Quaid-e-Azam stayed for the night. The Pestonjis who owned a shop on the Bund, were Parsis and themselves hailed from Bombay. Next morning the Quaid-e-Azam came personally to

the office of the transport Company accompanied by the youngest son of Pestonjis and asked for the same car to take him to Pahalgam. It is Ghulam Jilani's life regret that in his exuberant youth, he refused the car as a result of which he took another car for his short journey. Agha Ghulam Jilani also remembers that a few days later, when he went to Pahalgam for a few days stay, he glimpsed Mrs. Jinnah several times; she was dressed in light-coloured saris and carried a tin of 555 cigarettes.

How long did the Quaid stay in Kashmir, which places he visited, how he spent the vacations, who were the people who came in contact with him and what impressions he carried back are not known.

......IN 1936

The next visit came in 1936. By now he had assumed the mantle of leadership of the Muslims of India and in Kashmir too the Muslims had risen from generations of slumber after the struggle of 1931. Quaid-e-Azam must have been pleased to note the refreshing change of the political climate. This time he was accompanied by Miss Fatima Jinnah. Again, details of the visit or its duration must await detailed research especially in occupied Kashmir. During his stay, the Jammu and Kashmir High Court had the honour of his appearance before it in at least two cases. It is incredible that the Quaid-e-Azam who was on vacation, should have appeared in these cases but nevertheless it is true.

At that time the Srinagar High Court consisted of Sir Barjor Dalal Chief Justice and Sheikh Abdul Qaiyum and Sahini as puisne Judges.

The most famous of these cases is that of Hanifa Begum versus the State. One Mirza Mehr Ali, Sub-Inspector, and his wife Hanifa Begum, stood accused under section 494 Penal Code—the offence of marrying an already married woman. Mirza Mehr Ali who later built a house in Baramula and settled there, told this writer that the Quaid-e-Azam was not willing to appear in the case because he was on a holiday but Mehr Ali succeeded in persuading him to accept his brief by pleading his contribution to the freedom struggle and his being a staunch Muslim Leaguer. In 1931 Mehr Ali had been largely instrumental in the burning of the vital Sangham bridge on the Srinagar-Jammu road, in order to obstruct and delay the movement of Dogra troops. The Quaid-e-Azam agreed to appear in his appeal but at the same time, declined to accept any fee. Mehr Ali also told this writer that he was very much disheartened when Quaid-e-Azam told him to give him the case-papers only a day in advance of the date fixed for arguments. It is obvious that the

Quaid-e-Azam had solved the problem the moment he heard the facts of the case from him.

Hanifa's first husband had been killed in a police firing in September 1931. She had then been married to one Abdul Kabir and subsequently to Mirza Mehr Ali. Kabir brought a complaint under section 494 Penal Code after a lapse of three years. Islam provides a waiting period of four months and ten days or 130 days for a widow to remarry. It is known as Iddat. The defence plea that the complainant's marriage had taken place during Iddat and was therefore invalid had been rejected by the subordinate courts. The trial court acquitted Mehr Ali, for want of knowledge but convicted the woman. Wrote the Chief Justice: "It may be complained that in a man-presided court, it is the woman who pays." It appeared to be, on facts, a hopeless case. There was, therefore, great excitement, particularly in legal circles, as to why and how did the great Barrister agree to appear in such a hopeless case, and that too, without any fee. The Court premises was flooded with people drawn from almost every section, lawyers, Government servants on leave, shop-keepers, students, etc.

The Quaid-e-Azam came without any books, which was quite unusual those days. Many a hearts, partisans to the case or personal admirers of the counsel, must have sunk and their pulse shot-up, to find him without any case-law. His address was brief and to the point. He sprang a real surprise by conceding, for purposes of argument, that the relevant date advanced by the prosecution was correct. There was pin-drop silence as if the hearts of on-lookers who wanted him to win, came to a stand-still. They exchanged bewildered looks, but the next moment he said something that made everyone subconsciously ensure that his feet were really on the ground, as if a whole audience of statues had suddenly come to life. He argued that the period of four months and ten days can be counted in months, only when death occurs on the 1st of the lunar month but otherwise it had to be counted as 130 days. By the latter calculation, the marriage of the lady with the complainant was within Iddat and hence not a valid one.

What actually happened in the Court during arguments is not known but it is remembered as a legend that after the Quaid-e-Azam said that counting of months applied only when death takes place on the appearance of the crescent moon and that in all other cases, it was to be 130 days, the Chief Justice asked:

"Mr. Jinnah. Is there any Authority?"
Quaid-e-Azam:
"My Lord, I am the Authority."

The Quaid-e-Azam addressed a meeting in the spacious lawns of the Mujahid Manzil on the occasion of the Milad-un-Nabi. An address of welcome was presented by Chaudhri Ghulam Abbas Khan in his capacity as President of the Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference. Quaid-e-Azam spoke mostly on Muslim law and culture and said that Prophet Mohammad (peace be upon him) was the greatest law-giver and that his laws were based on the principles of justice and the good of humanity. He congratulated Muslims for their unity and commending their political awakening, advised them to strive for the co-operation of the minorities.

THE ROYAL WELCOME

The third and the last visit came in May, 1944. In response to an invitation extended by the National Conference leaders, and what appears to be a standing invitation by the Muslim Conference, the Quaid-e-Azam, accompanied by Miss Fatima Jinnah, entered the State on 8th May. He was received at Suchetgarh border by Chaudhri Ghulam Abbas Khan, Mr. A.R. Saghar and Ch. Hameedullah Khan on behalf of the Muslim Conference and Bakhshi Ghulam Mohammad on behalf of the National Conference, and taken in a procession to Jammu which had been gaily decorated by Muslims. He was taken round the city in an open car. The National Conference did not figure prominently in the reception because its local leaders Girdhari Lal Dogra and Mr. Mulak Raj Saraf, being personally pro-Congress and anti-League, kept aloof from the arrangements for the reception. Muslims of Jammu, however, gave a memorable reception and it is said that the city had never witnessed such popular enthusiasm and such vast crowds. He addresed a public meeting after evening prayers.

Accompanied by Chaudhri Ghulam Abbas Khan and Bakhshi Ghulam Mohammad, Quaid-e-Azam resumed his onward journey on the 9th and stayed for the night at Banihal. At Batote, Udhampur, Ramban and Banihal, large Muslim crowds had assembled to give him an enthusiastic welcome but he did not stop anywhere. At Banihal he was received by Mir Waiz Mohammad Yusuf Shah, Mirza Mohammad Afzal Beg and a large banner-waving and jubilantly slogan-chanting crowd.

On 10th May, he left for Srinagar accompanied by Chaudhri Ghulam Abbas, Mir Waiz Mohammad Yusuf Shah, Mirza Mohammad Afzal Beg and Bakhshi Ghulam Mohammad. The grandeur of the reception and the thickness of the crowds began steadily increasing as the fleet of cars carrying the great leader slowly wended its way towards Srinagar. At Khanabal, he made a brief halt for lunch. Mir Waiz Sahib and Bakhshi Ghulam Mohammad—inveterate foes since 1931, sat together, for



Quaid-e-Azam in Jammu on 9th May 1944

the first time, in the over-powering presence of the Leader. It was a miracle, the depth and unimaginability of which only Kashmiris can appreciate. Just as the reception from Suchetgarh to Ramban was a Muslim Conference show, it was a National Conference show from Banihal onwards. The entire route had been so gaily decorated as never before. Hundreds of beautifully erected gates and arches of branches from stately cypress, pinus longifolio, cidrus lubanis, pinus excelsa, poplars, mulberry, walnut and chinar trees, decorated with his photographs and those of Allama Iqbal, Kamal Attaturk, Anwar Pasha, Amanullah Khan and Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, with multi-coloured flower garlands hanging around them, so effortlessly sprang up that one wondered about the magic of the name that Jinnah was. Beyond Kazigund, the throngs multiplied and the pageantry of colour and beauty was a spectacle to be long cherished by generations of those who had the glory of participation and the pride to say: I saw him. Bare-footed and tattered-clothed, the great majority of the welcoming 'Hatos' had treked on foot, many a hill and dale, in order to catch a glimpse of the MAN, who was born to change the destiny of his people. From a minority, pitifully imploring an obstinate, narrow-minded and number-drunk majority for safeguards, he performed the miracle, within ten years, of not only transforming them into a Nation but also to be the proud sovereign of a great, new country which has given us security, honour and prosperity. Clad in newly-washed clothes as on Eid, the pheran-robed and red-qasabah wearing Kashmiri women, in their thousands had come out of their villages and lined up on both sides of the long road, singing songs of welcome.

When the frail but imperial figure of the leader passed through their rows, thousands of men and women were unable to control themselves as his very sight stirred up deep emotions resulting in tears trickling down their eyes. Many actually wept under the sheer weight of joy. Maunds of flower petals were showered on the car. Imagine how frequently the car must have been forced to stop, as instead of two, it took the procession eleven hours to cover a distance of 80 miles. Unable to reach the Quaid, many people touched his car as a good omen.

Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, Khawaja Ghulam Mohammad Sadiq and Maulana Saeed Masudi welcomed him on the outskirts of the city. On reaching Srinagar at 6 p.m., he was taken straight to the Pratap Park where in course of his speech, he described the reception all through his way as a 'royal welcome'. Processions and welcomes had been a routine aspect of his movements since at least thirty years and the fact that it was only in connection with the welcome accorded him from Suchetgarh to Srinagar that he used the words "royal welcome" (Quaid-e-Azam was

extremely careful in the choice of words) itself shows its grandeur and vastness. A mass of humanity of all ages and sections had gathered to welcome him. Among them were many a foreign tourists as well as Shrimati Mridula Sarabhai. The address of welcome was presented by Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah himself. He repeatedly referred to the Quaid-e-Azam as "the beloved leader of the Muslims of India". In his brief address, the Quaid-e-Azam said:—

"I thank you all for the royal welcome accorded to me, but it was not meant for my person; it was meant for the All India Muslim League of which I am the President. By it you have honoured the Muslims of India and their Party, the Muslim League."

From Pratap Park, the Quaid-e-Azam was taken again in a procession to Drugjan where Muslim Conference had made arrangements to present an address of welcome. Addressing the meeting here, the Quaid-e-Azam said:—

"If your objective is one, then your voice will also become one. I am a Muslim and all my sympathies are for the Muslim Cause."

In Srinagar he stayed in Sir Maratab Ali's bungalow 'Koshak' situate in the Nishat Bagh. After sometime he shifted to a beautiful and spacious House-boat named 'Queen Elizabeth'. It was then parked near Lal Mandi garden on the banks of Jhelum. Invited to stay as a guest of His Highness' Government, the Quaid-e-Azam shifted to the Government Guest House No. 4 for a stay of two weeks but curtailed it by a week especially because neither the Prime Minister nor any other Minister displayed even the normal courtesy of making a call on the great leader. Hari Singh was himself away from the State and it seems that none of them dare even make a courtesy call on the acknowledged leader of Muslim India for fear of inviting displeasure of the Sovereign. About a week before his return, Maharaja Hari Singh returned to Srinagar from abroad. In answer to a letter desiring to pay a courtesy call, the Maharaja excused a meeting, claiming to be unwell.

I WISH YOU GOOD LUCK

The Aligarh Old Boys Association (Kashmir) held a reception in his honour in the Amar Singh Club, Srinagar, which was attended, among others, by Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, Mirza Mohammad Afzal Beg, Khawaja Ghulam Mohammad Sadiq, Khawaja Ghulam Mohi-ud-Din Kara, Mr. Ghulam Mohi-ud-Din Hamdani, Mr. Yusuf Bachh, Pandit Madhsudhan Kak, Shiv Narain Fotedar, Pandit A.N. Raina, Pandit G.A. Lal and Mr. J.N.

Chakku, all former students of Aligarh. There was an apparently impromptu exchange of questions/answers between the Quaid-e-Azam and Mr. Hamdani but it can be safely assumed, know as I personally do, the iron discipline within the National Conference then, that the questions must have been previously worked out by his leaders and the 'duty' entrusted to him. These question-answers are reproduced below:

Mr. Hamdani: Sir, would the overwhelming Hindu majority in the subcontinent allow the establishment of Pakistan?

Quaid-e-Azam: If Mr. De Valera could succeed in separating Ireland, why can't ten crore Muslims succeed in carving out a country for themselves?

Mr. Hamdani: Sir, if Pakistan comes into being, would it not be economically backward?

Dismissing the apprehension with an emphatic "No", "No", the Quaid-e-Azam said:

Nevertheless, it is better to live in a hut in Pakistan with a sense of security than to live in a bungalow in India under the shadow of insecurity.

Emphasising the Muslim-majority-character of the Jammu and Kashmir State which meant their power in any democratic set up, Hamdani asked:

Sir, in so far as the National Conference and the Muslim Conference are concerned, which of them can better serve the interests of the State Muslims?

Quaid-e-Azam smiled a little and asked:

Apparently the National Conference but can you tell me how many Hindus and Sikhs are there in the National Conference?

The Nationalists were embarrassed; having invited the awkward situation, they had to thank themselves. There was no answer but someone from amongst the audience shouted: "Pandit Kayshup Bandhu"; someone else added, "Sardar Budh Singh". There was spontaneous laughter as the embarrassment of the Nationalists was too naked to be concealed. Commented the Quaid-e-Azam:

"Had the Hindus and Sikhs made a common cause with you and joined

the National Conference, the Maharaja could not resist your demand for Responsible Government even for seven days."

In another function, also held at the same place, in honour of the Quaid-e-Azam and arranged by Khawaja Ghulam Ahmed Jeweller, later a member of the State Assembly, leaders of all the minorities were also present. Some Pandit leaders including Pandit Shiv Narain Fotedar and Pandit Jia Lal Killam were sitting together. After tea, when the Quaid-e-Azam while leaving back, passed from near the Pandit guests, Pandit Shiv Narain Fotedar, later a member of the Indian Parliament, said tauntingly, within the hearing of the Quaid:

"I am the leader of the minorities but I am not the Jinnah of Kashmir."

Without pausing even for a second, forth came the retort:

"I wish you good luck."

The Quaid-e-Azam stayed in Srinagar upto the 25th of July. Apart from meeting hundreds of political workers, students, journalists, religious leaders and the representatives of minorities, he had several meetings with leaders of the National Conference and the Muslim Conference. Those who held talks with him on behalf of the National Conference, were Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, Mirza Mohammad Afzal Beg, Maulana Masudi, Khawaja Ghulam Mohammad Sadiq and Bakhshi Ghulam Mohammad. On behalf of the Muslim Conference, the political talks were held primarily by Chaudhri Ghulam Abbas alone though Mir Waiz Mohammad Yusuf Shah and Mr. A.R. Saghar also had a meeting or two with him. The object of the talks was to bring about a compromise between the two parties.

A deputation of the local journalists led by Chaudhry Abdul Wahid, Editor Al-Islah and President of the Kashmir Press Conference, had a long meeting with him, spread over two hours and fifteen minutes; the Quaid-e-Azam told them that the press was a great force but whereas it could be of immense advantage, it could also cause considerable damage. He told them that if run on proper lines, it could, besides shaping public opinion, also provide them with a correct lead. He expressed the hope that it would serve the country impartially.

The student leaders, including Comrade Abdul Aziz Mir had several meetings with him. In one of these meetings, the Quaid-e-Azam asked them whether they had read "Inside Kashmir" by Pandit Prem Nath Bazaz. Told that the book had been proscribed by the Kashmir Government

and was not therefore available, the Quaid told them that if anyone was really interested in a proscribed book, he *was* somehow able to get it. Obviously, he had himself gone through the book. When a student complained of the National Conference goondaism, the Quaid-e-Azam told them to be courageous and citing his own example, told them how, despite his weak health and old age, he didn't allow the Khaksar who made an attempt on his life, to escape till the arrival of his bodyguard.

A deputation of the Muslim Welfare Association comprising Khawaja Ghulam Nabi Gilkar and Maulvi Abdul Ghaffar of Al-Islah also had an interview with him. Mr. K. H. Khurshid who had just passed his B.A. examination and was a prominent leader of the Muslim Students Federation had a few meetings with the Quaid-e-Azam as a representative of the Orient Press and was asked to handle correspondence. It was thus that Mr. Khurshid built for himself a position of trust and confidence in the eyes of the Father of the Nation. An intelligent young man and dedicated to the cause of the Pakistan Movement, it was not difficult for him to endear himself to the great leader. This casual association was to prove of historical and fateful importance to the man who was chosen by the Great Leader as his Private Secretary and discharged these onerous duties to his complete satisfaction during the most momentous period not only of his life but also of the sub-continent's history since Britain made it a colony. The Socialist weekly "Forum", Bombay, captioned his photograph in April, 1945, with the following heading: "The under-thirty Kashmiri Private Secretary of the Quaid-e-Azam who keeps the secrets of his Boss safe".

FAILURE OF UNITY TALKS

From evidence available so far, it seems that Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah tried to convince the Quaid-e-Azam not only about the representative character of his party so far as the State Muslims were concerned, but also assured him that it was essentially a Muslim political party and that whether non-Muslims co-operated or not, its Muslim character was bound to persist. The Muslim Conference sought the dissolution of the National Conference. Sh. Mohammad Abdullah who initially sought the dissolution of the Muslim Conference, ultimately, offered to accept the overlordship of the All India Muslim League in matters of All India politics but in return sought a policy of neutrality on the part of the Muslim League in so far as the National Conference and the Muslim Conference were concerned. The Muslim Conference leadership was opposed to such a course of action largely because they derived their strength from their policy of solidarity with the Muslims of India as represented by the All India

Muslim League. There is evidence that the Quaid-e-Azam was told that Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah's offer of having no truck with the Congress could not be accepted because he might at any time stage a volte face and receive Pandit Nehru on the excuse of Nehru being a Kashmiri.

Quaid-e-Azam then proposed to hold a joint meeting with Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah and Chaudhri Ghulam Abbas in order to help them arrive at some compromise. According to the latter, when he was told that the proposed meeting was scheduled to take place at Koshak on the 3rd day, he at once expressed his disagreement and told the Quaid-e-Azam that it was more expedient that he and Sheikh Abdullah should first have an exclusive meeting so that if they were not able to evolve a compromise, the Muslim League may be spared of the likely embarrassment. The proposed joint meeting with the Quaid-e-Azam was, therefore, cancelled and instead a meeting between the two leaders and participated also by Maulana Saeed was held a few days later. Incidentally this was the first meeting between the two leaders since they parted company in 1940. According to Chaudhri Ghulam Abbas Khan, it proved futile because Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah told him that there was no chance of any change in their political convictions. It seems no meeting beeween Quaid-e-Azam and Sheikh Abdullah took place after the Abbas-Abdullah meeting. In retrospect it seems that if the Quaid-e-Azam had held the proposed meeting with the two leaders, and brought them face to face with each other, there might have been some improvement, as it may not have been possible for them to resist the logic and intense sincerity of the Father of the Nation or at least the tragic rupture that followed may have been avoided or delayed. Unity of the two parties or an understanding between them with regard to League—Congress affiliations was of such vital importance that no procrastination of parleys should have been tiresome. The very fact that the Quaid-e-Azam had, after several meetings with Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah and his colleagues, considered a joint meeting desirable and opportune, was itself a sign of improvement and showed that the talks had not been barren and that some basis was available for a joint conference. The Muslim Conference High Command very well knew that Mirza Afzal Beg and Maulana Saeed were at heart as much anti-Congress as any Muslim Conference leader and were ardent supporters of Pakistan. No effort was made to set up liaison with them so as to use them as an internal pressure group within their own party. A balanced examination of League-Abdullah relations seems to be premature.

QUAID-E-AZAM'S ADDRESS AT MUSLIM CONFERENCE SESSION

The annual session of the Muslim Conference was held under the presidentship of Chaudhri Ghulam Abbas Khan in the compound of Jamia Masjid on 17th June, 1944. It is estimated that over a lac of Muslims turned up to hear the Father of the Nation.

The Quaid-e-Azam rose to speak at 10 p.m. For about fifteen minutes he was unable to begin his speech on account of the cries of jubilation that rose from the audience. Caps and turbans were seen flying in the air. Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, Maulana Mohammad Saeed and Bakhshi Ghulam Mohammad were later learnt to have been watching the proceedings from the third floor of a party follower in the vicinity of the Islamia Park. Given below is an English translation of the speech delivered in Urdu:—

"Mr. President, brothers in Islam. I have no words to thank you for the honour accorded to me. I see that about one lac Muslims are present in this meeting and among them are people from all sections, old, young, traders, labourers and even women. Gentlemen, the condition of Muslims of Jammu and Kashmir has deteriorated so much that tears come in my eyes. From every angle, theirs is a sad plight.

But when I look at this public meeting, I feel happy and confident that Muslims have now awakened and are united under the flag of the Muslim Conference. You have been trying since 1931 and it is because of these efforts that Muslims of all classes and schools of thought are present here today. Don't think that it, by itself, is enough; you have to work hard. You know that I have been staying here since a month and during this period, men of every school of thought came to me. Whoever wished to see me, I met him readily and had discussions with him. From them, I have heard of your problems, oppression and hardships. I have also found that among the people who met me, 99% supported the Muslim Conference. Mr. President, I have come to this conclusion after meeting the people here and now it is your duty to take care of them and train them properly.

Of course, some Muslims who came to see me were of the view that Muslims should join the National Conference. They gave certain arguments in support of their view which I heard and considered. You know that I have not come here for the purpose of strengthening someone or weakening someone else. I have also said that

your problems are different from the problems of British India but just as you have treated me as a Mussalman, it is my duty as a Muslim to advise you correctly as to which course would be proper and ensure your success.

So far as the National Conference is concerned, I do not know how it can succeed in its aim. Consequently, I asked the supporters of the National Conference as to how much time has elapsed since it was brought into being and as to whether Hindus, Sikhs and others have also joined it? I was told that it had been set up six years back and a few Hindus and Sikhs had joined it. I told them that if in a long period of six years, Hindus and Sikhs have, as a whole, kept aloof from the National Conference, who else remain there except Muslims? I was then told that even if Hindus and Sikhs are not there, the Conference doors should remain open for them. I told them that if after remaining open for six years, it has served no purpose, what was the necessity of keeping it open again? In my view it was a mistake, the result of which would be that the Muslims would be divided into two camps which would bring about tension between them.

I did my best to make them understand the logic of the argument *but I was told that we want to tell the world that there was no communalism in the State and behind the curtain of nationalism we will pursue the programme of the Muslim Conference and that they were supporters of Pakistan.* I say that the Indian National Congress had adopted the same method in British India. It claimed to represent all Indians and did a lot of false propaganda all over the world. This, however, is not a fact as Congress was in reality a Hindu organisation. The result was that slowly the few Muslims, Christians, Sikhs and Achhuts who had joined it separated themselves. Whenever the question of the rights of these backward minorities came before the Congress, the Hindu majority rejected it so much so that for forty years, Congress continued with this deceptive policy. Do you also want to practise this deception? When Congress deception could not succeed, how can yours? Therefore, I will advise you in the light of these facts that the conditions prevalent in the State are not different from those obtaining in British india. Therefore, you will also face difficulties by adopting this course of action and will never be able to secure the confidence of Hindus and Sikhs. I would go even to the extent of saying that if in this State you adopt the policy and deception practised by the Indian National Congress, it is you who will suffer in the long run. I say with absolute confidence that after forty years continuous efforts, Muslims, Sikhs, Scheduled Castes and Christians are out of Congress. Please do not think that

we bear any enmity towards Hindus and Sikhs or that we do not respect their religion, culture or philosophy. We only want justice. We tell every nation to organise itself separately so that all of us would then join our heads together to arrive at some honourable solution. There is no other way which can lead us to our ultimate goal. I, therefore, advise you that you should declare very clearly and openly that you are Muslims and that you represent all. We are always ready for an honourable agreement while maintaining our separate entity.

Gentlemen, some weeks ago, a Hindu Conference was held here. The speech made by Kanwar Chand Kiran Sharda showed clearly that Hindus and Sikhs do not, as claimed, demand responsible Government. If they really want such a Government, it would be a matter of happiness and I would advise you that through an agreement with them you may set up such a Government. You must remember that you will have to work very hard for the attainment of the responsible Government and will have to undergo sacrifices. Responsible Government is not a cake which the Maharaja Bahadur will present to you so that you may eat it. You must first organise your nation; you have to improve the educational, economic and social condition of Muslims. The condition obtaining now is that a poor labourer, after working for a full month, is not able to earn more than rupees twelve, or six annas a day. You have first to attend to these things. God has given you every thing. Kashmir, which is known as a paradise, the gem in the ring as the world is, and an unparalleled country, what such a country does not possess? But what have you done? Oh Muslims! awake, stand up and work hard and bring life to this dead nation. Improve your condition in every sphere of life. There is only one way to do it and that is unity, solidarity, a single flag, a single platform and an ideal. If you are able to achieve them, you must succeed.

Mr. President, there is every thing in your hands. As soon as you discover yourself, I am sure, the Maharaja will gladly grant you responsible Government. Times are changing fast. The earth is squeezing. It is only an effort that is needed on your part. If you do that, other nations will treat you with respect. The position of British India is different and that of the State is also different. *Even then I assure you that despite the Muslim League policy of non-intervention in the affairs of Indian States, the services and support both of myself and the Muslim League is at your service.* In British India our goal is Pakistan which we shall achieve. We are thankful for the

support extended in the matter. Although we are determined to achieve our goal by sheer dint of our strength, still I assure you that the moral sympathies of the entire Muslim world are with us. Egypt, Afghanistan, Iran, Turkey and the Muslims of the Arab countries support Pakistan.

Mr. President, we also pray that God may give you success in the achievement of your goal. You also kindly pray for our success. I am sure that you are treading on the right path. The destination is before you; all that is needed is unity, a common platform and a common flag; also needed is an honest and sincere spirit of service. I have no doubt that you will succeed."[1]

The Muslim Conference session passed a resolution moved by Mr. A.R. Saghar demanding the setting up of a responsible Government. Among other resolutions passed at the session, some related to the demand for abolition of restriction on cow-slaughter, the withdrawal of Hindi script, amendment of Arms Act, due representation in Government services and restoration of religious places. Mr. Mohammad Hasham Gazdar, then Home Minister, Government of Sind, and Kanwar Doctor Mohammad Ashraf also attended the session.

"DO I LOOK LIKE A KASHMIRI?"

The Quaid-e-Azam attended very few functions. The most important among them was a lunch arranged by Mir Waiz Mohammad Yusuf Shah at Mir Waiz Manzil. The number of guests exceeded three hundred. It was a 'farshi khana'. Perhaps for the first time, the Quaid-e-Azam sat on the floor to have his meals. More than twenty one courses were served. Syed Nazir Hussain Shah, recounting his reminiscences, told this writer that Miss Fatima Jinnah did not attend the function and that the Quaid-e-Azam wore a sherwani and a shalwar. He sat on a specially-laid 'masnad' with Mir Waiz on his right and Syed Nazir Hussain Shah, by dint of his own efforts and luck, on his left. Chaudhri Ghulam Abbas sat in front of the Quaid-e-Azam. Unaccustomed to floor-eating, the Quaid-e-Azam dropped a few drops of soup on his shalwar. Special care had been taken to avoid the use of spices of the usual quantity in the dishes prepared for the Quaid-e-Azam. After the meals were over, Mir Waiz Sahib presented a full Kashmiri dress consisting of a shawl, pheran, turban and zari shoes. The Quaid-e-Azam not only accepted it amidst great ovation, enjoyed and joined by all the guests but stood up to wrap himself with the shawl after pure Kashmiri fashion. After having done so amidst

1. Javed, 6th July, 1944.

great applause, he looked towards the guests and asked, "Do I look like a Kashmiri?"

Accompanied by a large number of Muslim Conference leaders the Quaid-e-Azam left Srinagar on 25th July. The first stop came at Baramula where he was taken straight to the pendal while Miss Fatima Jinnah dropped at the residence of Mr. Zubair, the younger brother of Chaudhri Ghulam Abbas Khan, then an Assistant Engineer. An address of welcome was presented by Khawaja Ghulam Din Wani on behalf of the local Muslim Conference branch and by Khawaja Ghulam Mohi-ud-Din Darzi, President Muslim Conference Sopore, on behalf of the Sopore branch. While the meeting was in progress, a batch of about 20 to 25 students and National Conference workers led by Mr. Mohammad Maqbool Sherwani and including this writer tried to cross the old bridge in order to reach the pendal to stage a demonstration. The pendal had been erected on the right bank of Jhelum while the demonstrators came from the left bank of the river. They were stopped in the midst of the bridge by a police force headed by Inspector Umrao Khan. A Paris-trained Police officer, he was a staunch supporter of the Muslim League and it was unthinkable for him that any one should succeed in staging a demonstration, however peaceful, against the Quaid-e-Azam while he was incharge of the Police force. The Police resorted to a mild lathi charge to disperse the demonstrators; let there be no doubt that it was done not in execution of any Government policy but at the personal initiative and responsibility of Mr. Umrao Khan. Consequently there was no demon tration. Mr. Sherwani, however, succeeded in somehow crossing the river and there was an exch nge of brick-bats between him and some people in the audience; nobody was injured.

Another meeting was held at Uri on the same day where Maulvi Ghulam Mohammad presented an address of welcome. The Quaid-e-Azam made a brief speech. The Muslims of Muzaffarabad had been preparing for several days to accord him a befitting reception. As there was no suitable house where he could be lodged for an overnight stay, an application was moved for the reservation of the local Dak bungalow, situate at the meeting place of Jhelum and Neelum. Mr. Sonam Narbu, a Budhist who was then an Assistant Engineer and is presently Minister, P.W.D. in the occupied Kashmir cabinet, reserved two rooms in the bungalow. If not in the whole of the sub-continent, at least in Jammu and Kashmir, it is the only building which has the singular distinction of having housed the Quaid-e-Azam, Nehru and Gandhiji.

QUAID-E-AZAM HOSTS A LUNCH AT MUZAFFARABAD

All sections of Muslim public opinion were unanimous that the Quaid-e-Azam should receive a heart-warming welcome. These included Master Abdul Aziz and Khawaja Abdul Qadir, the most prominent leaders of the District National Conference and Pir Hisamuddin Gilani, M.L.A. of the Zamindara group. The Quaid-e-Azam reached Muzaffarabad at 7 p.m. Thousands of Muslims were at hand to welcome him. The Sultan of Boi sent a batch of uniformed volunteers. He was straight away taken to the pendal and it is significant to point out that the address of welcome was read and presented by Khawaja Abdul Qadir, General Secretary of the District National Conference. That a ranking National Conference leader from the district should have agreed to present the address of welcome, even several weeks after the failure of unity talks and Quaid-e-Azam's verdict against National Conference, shows that at least an important section of the rank and file in the party had been influenced by the Quaid's verdict and could have been pushed into the mainstream of the Muslim political thinking if even a little effort had been made to that end. The Quaid-e-Azam made a brief speech, reiterating what he had been telling everywhere, namely, that the Muslims have one God, one Prophet (Peace be upon him) and one Book and that therefore they should also have a single platform. From here he was taken in a procession to the Dak bungalow. It needs to be mentioned that a part of the Rest House was occupied by British and American soldiers on leave from the front but as soon as they learnt of the Quaid-e-Azam's presence in the other part of the building, they vacated their rooms voluntarily and absolutely on their own, as a mark of respect for the Quaid-e-Azam so that not only was not the party handicapped in the matter of accommodation but also to ensure that their presence did not disturb the Quaid-e-Azam. We remember these unknown soldierly soldiers with gratitude.

Mr. Saeed Ahmad Zia, Advocate, now a practising lawyer at Gujrat and then President of the District Muslim Conference, had arranged a dinner for the Quaid-e-Azam at the Dak bungalow and invited a select gathering of local Muslim leaders. However, the Quaid-e-Azam not feeling well, excused his presence and had his dinner with Miss Fatima Jinnah in his own room.

After dinner, Mr. Zia was called in and told to arrange a lunch on the following day and invite the same guests whom he had invited for the dinner. The reason obviously was that having been unable to join them at dinner, the Quaid-e-Azam felt a moral responsibility of giving them an opportunity of having a meal with himself and, therefore, instead of

accepting an invitation for lunch from any other person, decided to play the host himself. He was earlier scheduled to leave for Rawalpindi after break-fast. He prolonged his stay by several hours though as a result he had to travel at the peak hot hours in the last week of July. And who were the important guests for whom he took all the trouble? The pheran-robed, Maulvi looking, simple folk, village tailors, petty shopkeepers, Imams and the like. At a time when the battle for Pakistan was at its height, the General thought these people to be important—so important as to defer his departure by several hours in order to play them host.

There had been a slight drizzle during the preceding night. In the morning, the Quaid-e-Azam had a morning walk alongwith Miss Fatima Jinnah. Mr. Zia remembers that the Quaid-e-Azam wore a white chappal which contacted a slight mud. The Quaid-e-Azam took a pebble and started removing the mud when Zia rushed with joyful tears for having the opportunity to do the job. After a feeble resistance, he was allowed the honour. On his return to the Dak bungalow, Quaid-e-Azam told him, after dwelling on the need for a Muslim press, that he wanted to bring out an Urdu daily from Lahore. Asked whether he had decided upon the name of the paper, the Quaid-e-Azam said "اک دم" Mr. Zia could naturally not follow and translating it into English, repeated: "At once—At once". The Quaid-e-Azam gave a jerk to his head and said: "No, No, اکدام, Action, Action". Mr. Zia was fortunate to have possessed the presence of mind to understand what the Quaid-e-Azam meant because, a district lawyer, in such a far off, out of the way place, it would have been quite normal for him to have been overwhelmed by the thought of the historic opportunity of being in the presence of the Father of the Nation, and hence unconscious of what was actually passing between them. Zia then said " اقدام " and the Quaid-e-Azam pleasantly noded his head in agreement. According to Mr. Zia, Miss Fatima Jinnah was so much impressed by the natural beauty and landscape at Domel as to have said that the Maharaja could have as well made this place his capital. The words were prophetic because only three years later, Muzaffarabad *did* become the Capital of Azad Jammu and Kashmir.

Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah must have been greatly disappointed. He had, largely, to blame himself because to have expected neutrality between the two parties on the part of the Father of the Nation was unthinkable. How could the All India Muslim League which was demanding partition of the sub-continent on the basis of the two-Nation theory, take a contradictory position in Kashmir? If nationalism was unacceptable in British India, it could not be acceptable in Kashmir simply because here

It meant Muslim rule. Quaid-e-Azam was not given to double standards and even his worst critics have acknowledged his integrity and clear thinking. The best course for the National Conference leadership was to dissolve the National Conference and join the Muslim Conference. The fact that National Conference was decidedly the stronger and the better organised of the two, should not have stood in the way of its High Command in taking a bold, realistic and imaginative decision. However, the National Conference High Command had already undertaken to support the demand for Pakistan and had thus offered to accept the over-lordship of the All India Muslim League, atleast on All India matters. It was a bold and imaginative decision which meant a reversal of its pro-Congress policies pursued in some form or other since 1938. It was bound to alienate the few non-Muslims who still remained in the party. That would have brought it nearer to the Muslim League. One wonders whether the importance of this offer and its far-reaching consequences were realised at the time by the Muslim Conference leadership? There is no evidence at all that the latter made any effort to grasp its importance or make it a basis for the widening of contact and understanding with the National Conference. On the other hand, by introducing Nehru behind the back of National Conference leaders and by linking him with Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah as "Kashmiris", no service was rendered to the cause of Kashmir's future.

To counter-act the emphatic declaration made by the Quaid-e-Azam on 17th June calling upon the State Muslims to join the Muslim Conference, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah and his party started a mass-contact campaign to explain their position to the Muslim masses. In this connection, he addressed about a dozen meetings in Srinagar and in one of them said that Mr. Jinnah would be better advised to leave the State people to their own fate otherwise "he would expose him". This statement was by itself condemnable and provocative and mirrored the fascist tendencies of the National Conference but some newspapers twisted it, particularly the pro-Congress Urdu press at Lahore such as Milap, Pratap and Vir Bharat. There were also minor clashes between workers of the two parties in Srinagar city. Quaid-e-Azam was already aware of the fascist tendencies of the National Conference. While having tea at Khanabal, a worker of the Muslim Conference, Mohammad Ismail, had appeared before him and shown a tooth allegedly broken during a clash between workers of the two parties. The Quaid-e-Azam, therefore, issued the following statement at the time of his departure:

> "I have been here for sometime and I have seen all classes of people, and had the opportunity of hearing various views, and also press

reports and criticisms, some of which were unkind and unjust, but on the whole I am very thankful for the kindness that was shown to me, especially by the Mussalmans.

As I said at the moment I reached Jammu, it is not the policy of the Muslim League to interfere with the internal administration of this State or the grave and serious issues that face the Maharaja and his Government, as between him and his people, but we are certainly very deeply concerned with the welfare of the Mussalmans in the State, and I must say that even a casual visitor cannot but be shocked to see the condition of the people in this State, even in matters of their elementary needs and necessities. Sir B.N. Rao has just taken charge as Prime Minister of the State, and now the people are looking up to him and expecting that he will take effective measures for their betterment.

As regards the Mussalmans, as I said, we are vitally concerned with their welfare, but I regret that although Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah and his party and the Muslim Conference discussed matters with me in Delhi and in Lahore before my arrival here, and were good enough to accord me a great reception, and were anxious that I should hear both sides and bring about a settlement, when I, after consideration, suggested that the Mussalmans should organise themselves under one flag and on one platform, not only my advice was not acceptable to Sheikh Abdullah, but, as is his habit which has become a second nature with him, he indulged in all sorts of language of a most offensive and vituperative character in attacking me. My advice to the Mussalmans is that the differences can only be resolved by argument, discussion, exchange of views, and reason, and not by goondaism and one thing that I must draw the attention of the Kashmir Government about, is that goondaism must be put down at any cost, and there should be a constitutional liberty of speech and freedom of thought, which is the elementary right of every citizen under any civilised form of Government."

After the Quaid-e-Azam left Baramula, a band of Muslim students who had been angered by the attempted hostile demonstration led by Mr. Maqbool Sherwani and had since then been on the look out for him, found him in the bazar near tehsil office and attacked him. They were led by Doctor Major Muzaffar Shah, now a Medical practitioner at Lahore and at that time a second year student of the King Edward Medical College, Lahore. Sherwani, somehow, succeeded in freeing himself from their grip and ran away towards the left bank of Jhelum, pursued by some of them. He jumped into the river and was lucky enough to swim ashore safely.

In the evening, Bakhshi Ghulam Mohammad, Pandit Kayshup Bandhu and Pandit Shyam Lal Saraf descended from Srinagar after receiving a report from the local branch about the incidents of the day. They addressed a workers' meeting in the office of the Youth Congress and praised the "restraint" shown by workers of the National Conference and the Youth Congress in the face of what they termed as "grave provocation". After the meeting when Mr. Maqbool Sherwani and myself were left alone with them, Bakhshi Ghulam Mohammad started scolding Mr. Sherwani as to why they had not given a thrashing to the opponents. This writer was surprised at the difference between profession and practice and when it was brought to the notice of Bakhshi Ghulam Mohammad, he smiled and said: "these things are not meant for a public hearing."

A month or two after the departure of the Quaid-e-Azam, Mr. Mohammad Shafi, later Editor weekly "Iqdam" Lahore, and a member of the provincial Assembly, who was then Chief Reporter of the Civil and Military Gazette, came to Srinagar and had a long interview with Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah. The controversial speech referred to above also came up under discussion. This writer was present during the interview which took place in a small cabin of the Majestic Hotel, Srinagar. Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah told Mr. Shafi that he could never even think of using derogatory language about the Quaid-e-Azam and that his speeches had been deliberately distorted and misreported by a section of the press for ulterior ends. Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah had a high opinion about Mr. Mohammad Shafi and told me so after his departure.

SEARCH FOR A KASHMIRI-SPEAKING LEADER

The main problem with the Muslim Conference, as an organisation, in Kashmir valley and Kashmiri-speaking areas of Jammu province such as Banihal, Reasi, Kishtwar, Bhadarwah, Rajouri, Haveli and Poonch city etc., was the absence of a presentable Kashmiri-speaking leader. Quaid-e-Azam realised very early that unless the Party was able to approach Kashmiri-speaking Muslims through a leader who could speak to them in their mother-tongue, it was not possible to build up the organisation or effectively challenge the leadership of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah. During his stay in Srinagar, the Quaid-e-Azam asked Chaudhri Ghulam Abbas Khan to search for a presentable Kashmiri-speaking person, whom the Quaid could himself launch as their leader. The man Chaudhri Sahib ultimately selected and proposed to the Quaid-e-Azam was Maulvi Mohammad Yahya, the younger brother of Mir Waiz Mohammad Yusuf Shah and a Deputy Inspector in the Customs Department of the State! With whatever intentions the name might have been suggested, it was instantly rejected by the Quaid-e-Azam because it was no use app-

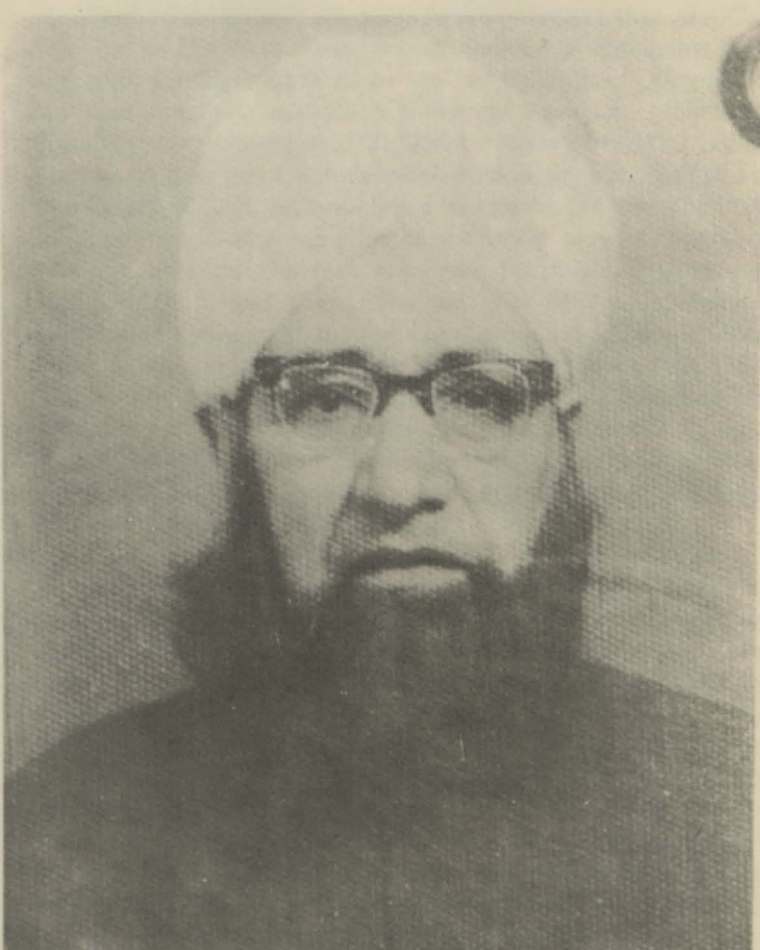
roaching the politically-conscious Kashmiri Muslims through a man of the same family whom Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah had long ago ousted from the political life of the State except in a pocket in Srinagar and, for that matter, Mir Waiz was himself a hundred times better than his younger brother. It speaks volumes of the Quaid-e-Azam's great political insight that he realised in a matter of days what the Muslim Conference leaders had signally failed to realise even after an experience of years that neither Mir Waiz Sahib nor a member of his family could deliver the goods. Two years later they tried to fill the vacuum by introducing Agha Shaukat Ali. Before joining Muslim Conference, he was a Tehsildar. A law graduate, intelligent and a versatile writer in both English and Urdu, Agha Shaukat Ali failed, as could be easily foreseen, to catch the imagination of Kashmiri Muslims, largely because he came from a feudal family which had, over generations, been too well-known for its pro-Dogra leanings; his maternal grand-father, Agha Sayed Hussain, having been the only Kashmiri-speaking Muslim in the entire hundred-year Dogra rule, to have "earned" the Dogra title of Thakar which was conferred upon him by the more-hated Maharaja Hari Singh. He headed the Education department as Minister in 1929-31 and it was in this department where the representation of Muslims was the lowest; when the state of Muslim representation in the department came up for scrutiny before the Glancy Commission, the Government took the plea that Muslims could not complain about it, as it was headed by a Muslim. Again, it was very difficult in the year 1945 for anyone with a feudal background, to command mass appeal in the Valley. Feudal satraps have not been popular anywhere in the world and I believe, at any time, but due to their pro-Dogra role in the 1931 uprising in which more than a hundred Muslims were bulleted to death in the Valley alone, hatred against the whole class was wide-spread and overwhelming. It will also be recalled that in 1929 when the liberal Premier Sir Albion Banrerjee in a statement, following his resignation, exposed the deliberately-pursued Dogra policy of keeping Muslims backward and suppressed, it was Thakar Sayed Hussain who shuttled between Srinagar and Jammu to arrange for its refutation by confirmed toadies. Yet again, the unfortunate Shia-Sunni differences have been considerably deeper in the Valley for several historical reasons. Three serious and wide-spread riots in Srinagar have been already noticed in this book. Agha Shaukat Ali belonged to the Shia community which was in a microscopic minority. As principles count very little in our politics, his Shia background could not attract sizable Sunni support and had he done so, the Nationalists would have definitely brought his religious beliefs into sharp public focus and disrupted Muslim unity. It may be said in fairness to Agha Shaukat Ali that in the year 1946 it was difficult for any Kashmiri-speaking youngster to effectively challenge the leadership of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah

but it must also be recorded in fairness to history that the Muslim Conference leadership did not care to look beyond the family of Mir Waiz or the landed aristocracy. Was the Muslim Conference High Command afraid of building up any potential Kashmiri-speaking leader?

Syed Nazir Hussain Shah has told this writer that the Quaid-e-Azam told him at Mir Waiz Manzil on the occasion of lunch that he had advised Chaudhri Ghulam Abbas Khan to learn Kashmiri language because in his view the Party could not otherwise make an effective head-way. According to the same source, Quaid-e-Azam recounted his own experience as to how years before when he had gone to Bengal to campaign in support of Syed Aziz-ul-Haq, a candidate for the Central Assembly, he discovered that on account of not being conversant with Bengali, he was not able to render any real assistance. Quaid-e-Azam also told him that it was there that he realised that now that he had decided upon active participation in politics, it was not possible to do so without learning the language of the masses and he had, therefore, at such an advanced age, learnt Urdu. Unfortunately, it was not possible for Chaudhri Sahib to learn Kashmiri. Comrade Mir Abdul Aziz Editor Weekly Insaf also states that the Quaid-e-Azam told a students deputation which included Mir Sahib that he had advised Ch. Ghulam Abbas to learn Kashmiri and cited his personal example.

The Muslim Conference was unable to reap much benefit from the impact of the visit of the Quaid-e-Azam. After his return, they retired to their homes and jobs and thus lost the brilliant initiative that the great leader had placed in their hands. Not a single tour of Kashmir valley, it may be recalled here, was ever undertaken by any top leader of the Muslim Conference at any time between the revival of the Party and the partition of the sub-continent. Mir Waiz Mohammad Yusuf Shah visited one or two towns in Islamabad district, once or twice, but he was always treated as a religious scholar or divine rather than a political leader and his speeches also, almost invariably, related to religious rather than political matters. Laments Pandit Prem Nath Bazaz:—

> "It speaks of the inefficiency, timidity and short-sightedness of the Muslim Conference leaders that they could not derive any advantage out of the consequences of the bombshell which Jinnah had thrown on the citadel of nationalism. They were perfectly complacent and thought that the Nationalists had been crushed by Jinnah's verdict and could never rise again. What is worse, when the Nationalists decided to whole-heartedly participate in the public reception to the Maharaja, they were afraid that their non-cooperation would prove suicidal. Incredibly enough, within a week after Jinnah's



Mir Waiz Mohammad Yusuf Shah

departure, the Muslim Conference leaders were rivalling the Nationalist leaders in huge preparation to receive the Maharaja in a procession through the streets of Srinagar. Jinnah's verdict seemed to have been wiped out of memory and the country was pulsating with the sentiments of loyalty towards the throne of the alien Hindu ruler."[1]

The next annual session of the Muslim Conference was scheduled to be held at Rawalakot. Thousands of local Muslims who had seen active service in connection with the World War, had been recruited from this area. Some of them had been already discharged. Again, there were thousands others who had served in the undivided Indian army. The Dogra Government did not therefore allow the Conference to hold its session at Rawalakot. Syed Nazir Hussain Shah was then not only President of the District branch but also the most effective political leader in the district. The Reception Committee was headed by Haji Mohammad Qasim, father-in-law of Sardar Mohammad Ibrahim Khan, with Sardar Behram Khan, Pleader, as Secretary. Instead of abandoning the session, the District leaders decided to accept the challenge and shifted the venue to Poonch city. The session was consequently held in the town under the presidentship of Mir Waiz Mohammad Yusuf Shah.

The Conference which was a great success and attracted thousands of ex-soldiers, passed a resolution supporting Muslim India's demand for Pakistan; in another resolution, it demanded independence for Poonch Jagir from Hari Singh.

CONGRESS WOOS ABDULLAH

The release of Congress workers and leaders who had been arrested in connection with the Quit India Movement, had begun as early as the middle of 1943 because the British Government had fully succeeded in suppressing the Movement within its very first month except, of course, in certain parts of U.P., Bihar and Bombay, where it continued for some time more. Even in a place like the N.W.F.P., it could not be sustained for more than a week. Punjab remained practically unaffected and the number of arrests from the province was so small that provincial Congress leaders publicly acknowledged their shame. Some Congress leaders, such as Shrimati Aruna Asaf Ali, Jai Prakash Narayan, Achhut Patwardhan and Mohan Lal Gautam went underground and organised isolated acts of sabotage. Mr. Jai Prakash Narayan and Achhut Patwardhan were later apprehended. Patwardhan had reportedly come to Srinagar and was arrested at Rawalpindi on his return. Mr. Narayan was on his way to Srinagar when he

1 Struggle for Freedom, p. 215.

was arrested at Ambala railway station. He was planning to escape from the country. Some of the freed Congress leaders visited Srinagar in the summers of 1944 and 1945. Most prominent among them were Mrs. Indira Gandhi and Shrimati Mridula Sarabhai. They were in close contact with Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah and were not only hosted by him but also played lavish hosts to him. The political game was obvious. The proposals put forth by Sir Stafford Cripps in the beginning of 1942 had for the first time officially envisaged partition of the sub-continent because the plan had recognised the right of the Muslim majority provinces to secede from the Central Federation and federate among themselves. This was due to the fact that the Muslim League had become a powerful mass organisation by 1942 and with the passage of time its power and prestige had gone still higher. The realisation seems to have dawned upon Congress circles that after all, the partition of the sub-continent may not be within their power to prevent. Kashmir occupied a unique place in the sub-continent. It had a common frontier with the Muslim majority provinces of the N.W.F.P. and Punjab. The State and its politics, therefore, assumed great importance in the Congress strategy. That is why despite Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah's non-participation in the Quit India Movement and the National Conference policy of at least verbal support in the war efforts of the Allies which ran counter to Congress policy, the far-sighted Congressmen chose to ignore it and made every effort to cement their personal and political bonds with Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah. The Congress game obviously was to keep Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah in good humour because they thought that if they succeeded in controlling his actions and thoughts, they need not bother about anything else. Two instances would illustrate the policy. A deputation of pro-Congress students met Shrimati Indira Gandhi in Srinagar in the 1944 summer and made an attempt to place before her their "grievances" against Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah. The deputationists were all Hindus and the grievances they wanted to air concerned partly with Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah's inherent "communalism" and partly his "dependence" upon Communists. This writer was told by the deputationists that Mrs. Indira Gandhi was deeply angered and refused to listen to them. The second instance occurred on 10th May, 1944, the day the Quaid-e-Azam entered Srinagar. Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah presented him an address of welcome which was termed by Congress circles as lavish and not in keeping with the dictates of nationalism. This writer was then President of the Kashmir Youth Congress, the only pronouncedly pro-Congress platform in Kashmir valley. Occasional study circles of select workers was one of the regular features of its activities. On 10th May, a select gathering of workers numbering not more than ten, was to be addressed by Shrimati Mridula Sarabhai. After the Pratap Park function, we went straight to our office for the study circle meeting. So did

Shrimati Sarabhai. The atmosphere at the meeting was over-shadowed by gloom and Shrimati Sarabhai seemed to be under heavy strain. It was the result of the feeling that Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah had been lost to nationalism. At the very outset, this writer, asked Shrimati Sarabhai as to what was to be done now, to which she replied without a moment's pause, "Instead of depending upon individuals, we may now have to go to the masses".

THE NEW KASHMIR PLAN

The annual session of the Party was held in Srinagar on the 28th, 29th and 30th September, 1944, in Pathar Masjid, a few weeks after the return of Quaid-e-Azam from Kashmir, with Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah as President. The session is important in that it adopted a political, economic and social programme known as "New Kashmir". A small pamphlet published both in English and Urdu, it is believed to have been written by the well-known Indian Communist leaders Mr. B.P.L. Bedi and his illustrious charming English wife Freda. It seems that the couple had been assigned to Srinagar by the Central Politburo at Bombay. The programme was adopted unanimously amidst great jubilation. In a foreword Sheikh Abdullah said:

> "In our New Kashmir, we shall build again the men and women of our State who have been dwarfed by centuries of servitude and create a people worthy of our glorious motherland".

Clauses 19, 23, 27 and 49 of the manifesto related to the functions of the Dogra Rulers which amounted to acceptance of the hereditary rule. It shocked and surprised the younger delegates. This writer was a member of the delegation from Baramula. The same evening when opportunity presented itself and Sheikh Sahib was informed of the general dissatisfaction of the younger delegates, he replied smilingly that it was only a matter of expediency and that the time was not yet ripe when the demand for abolition of the hereditary rule could be put forth. To illustrate the point of political evolution, he told us that the demand for full responsible Government was not raised till as late as 1937 and that in an earlier session, perhaps in 1934, when the Party Secretary Maulana Saeed displayed a motto captioned "We want repsonsible Government", he had torn the motto and "turned out" the Maulana from the open session.

The manifesto was divided into two parts, namely (1) the Constitutional structure of the State and (2) the National Economic Plan. The first part covered (*a*) Citizenship (*b*) National Assembly (*c*) Council of Ministers (*d*) Ruler (*e*) Justice (*f*) Local Administration and (*g*) National Language.

Freedom of press, freedom of assembly in meetings and freedom of street processions and demonstrations was guaranteed to all citizens. It also guaranteed that "privacy of home and secrecy of correspondence of the citizens shall not be violated except in accordance with law". Military training was made compulsory and every citizen was guaranteed the right to work and the right to rest. Other important provisions were as follows:

(*a*) All citizens shall be secured protection by law and recourse to the Courts through an Administration of Justice which was to be quick, cheap and impartial.

(*b*) The National Assembly was to be the highest Legislature of the State and was to be elected on the basis of universal adult sufferage for a period of five years, each Deputy to represent forty thousand citizens.

(*c*) The Council of Ministers was to be responsible to the National Assembly.

(*d*) A High Court of Judicature was to be the State's highest Judicial organ but there were to be peoples' Courts at the district and tehsil level.

(*e*) The organs of State power in the districts, tehsils, cities and villages were to be the Peoples' Panchayats.

(*f*) Kashmiri, Dogri, Balti, Urdu, Hindi, Punjabi and Dardi were to be the national languages but Urdu was to be the lingua franca.

(*g*) Women were given the right to elect and to be elected in all institutions on the basis of equality with men.

(*h*) Women were guaranteed equal rights with men in all fields of national life; political, economic, cultural as also in the State services.

(*i*) All children were guaranteed equality of opportunity, irrespective of their birth or parentage.

(*j*) All students were guaranteed the right to free education.

The economic plan envisaged the setting up of a National Agricultural

Council to execute and supervise the National Agricultural Plan. The basic principles of the plan were to be:—

(1) Abolition of landlordism;
(2) Land to the tiller;
(3) Co-operative associations for cultivation;
(4) Feeding the people as its primary objective;
(5) Peoples' control of the Forests.

The manifesto also declared that the Party stood for nationalisation of all key industries and, therefore, laid down the following principles:

(1) Abolition of the big private capitalists;
(2) All key industries to be managed and owned by the State;
(3) Private monopoly, whether formal or virtual, to be abolished;
(4) To implement the policy, a National Industrial Council to be set up.

The manifesto also envisaged the setting up of a National Communications Council comprising engineering experts and economic advisers, to improve communications, because, the manifesto said, "any big plan for the regeneration of the country must plan a simultaneous development of the means of communication and transport".

The distribution plan was to be executed by the National Marketing Council consisting of business experts and economic advisers because, to quote the manifesto, "distribution is a vital corner-stone of any planned economy and that evils of industrialisation can and should be avoided if there is to be any equitable system of distribution". Every working man, woman and child was guaranteed "freedom from want" but no parasite was to be granted "a share in consumption goods".

The safe-guarding of the health of the citizens was to be the primary duty of the State. Therefore, a National Council was to be set up for public health, education and housing. A National Public Health Council was to be constituted to ensure that there was at least one Doctor for every fifteen hundred people, that every village had a Medical attendant and First-aid post, establish a Medical college and encourage indigenous system of medicines both Ayurvedic and Unani. Then there was to be a National Education Council to prepare a scheme of State education containing proposals for the setting up of (*a*) a National University with special emphasis on tradition and history, (*b*) a Statistical Institute, (*c*) an Institute of Nationalities, (*d*) a net-work of higher Middle and Primary schools, (*e*) district colleges for men and women students and (*f*) adult education night schools.

Then there was to be a National Housing Council consisting of engineers, public health experts, architects and economic advisers to prepare a programme for town and village planning so that, to quote the manifesto, "the benefits of modern science, design and sanitation may be brought into the homes of workers and peasants of the State".

The manifesto also declared that "it is the plan of the National Conference to encourage our common culture, which includes the culture of all nationalities, resident in the State, by a many-sided plan of development through:

(*a*) establishment of a radio station in the Kashmir languages;
(*b*) establishment of a national film industry and national theatre;
(*c*) encouragement of youth activity;
(*d*) the protection and development of ancient monuments of historical interests; and
(*e*) establishment of an Institute of Art and Culture."

Banking was to be nationalised. A National Economic Council consisting of Bankers and Financial experts was to draw up a plan to:

(*a*) provide necessary funds for all productive organisations;
(*b*) regulate the price level; and
(*c*) fix a total wage bill.

The manifesto said that the money-lenders were to be put into the category of social parasites "who have no place in plan economy". Three Charters were attached to the plan enumerating and guaranteeing their respecitve economic, political, legal, cultural and social rights to peasants, workers and women.

A copy of the manifesto was submitted to the Maharaja sometime after the Conference boycotted the Royal Commission but, as expected, it was ignored.

The cost of living rose further by the winter of 1943-44. The peoples ability to purchase even the bare necessities of life, particularly food and fuel, was further adversely affected. The position was acute in Srinagar city. A successful move was initiated by the Communist wing of the National Conference to forge an alliance with the Muslim Conference and the Sanatan Dharam Yovak Sabha for a joint popular agitation. At a meeting of the representatives of the three parties, Khawaja Ghulam Mohi-ud-Din Kara, President of the Srinagar branch of the National Conference, succeeded in persuading the representatives of the other two Parties to

initiate a joint programme. Consequently a number of public meetings were held in different parts of the city. These attracted unprecedented crowds partly because the food and the fuel problem affected every one but partly because it was for the first time in many years that all sections of people were able to move freely and without fear of molestation in all parts of the city. The meetings were presided over, alternately, by city Presidents of the three Parties, who, of course, were second rank leaders in their own parties. None of the front rank leaders attended these meetings though they blessed the experiment. The interesting aspect of the meetings was that while a National Conference leader, Mr. Kara in this case, was able to address a public meeting for the first time in a locality like Wazpurra—the stronghold of Mir Waiz Mohammad Yusuf Shah, a leader of the Muslim Conference, Khawaja Abdus Salam Dalal, was able to do so in such localities as Maisuma, Rainawari and Habakadal—the strongholds of the National Conference. The Government no doubt took prompt notice of the popular mood and made better arrangements for the supply and distribution of shali as well as fuel. However, the man who benefitted the most in the experiment was undoubtedly Khawaja Ghulam Mohi-ud-Din Kara, a seasoned politician and a great public orator in Kashmiri.

THE UNFORGETABLE DARYAI JALUS

Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru and other members of the Congress Working Committee were released from Ahmednagar fort in July, 1945. His daughter Indira and grandsons were holidaying at Pahalgam. Pandit Nehru came almost straight to Kashmir, partly for reasons of health and partly to be with his daughter and grandsons. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, Mr. Asaf Ali, Mian Iftikhar-ud-Din and a host of other Congress leaders also flocked to Srinagar. Ostensibly they all came for reasons of health but there is no doubt that there was a method even in madness.

Pandit Nehru reached Srinagar on 19th July and drove straight to the residence of Pandit Brij Lal Nehru. The same evening he drove to Pahalgam where he addressed a public meeting on the next day and lavishly praised Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah. A few days later, he went to Gulmarg where Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and Mr. Asaf Ali were staying together. The National Conference arranged a river-procession in Srinagar for Congress leaders particularly Maulana Azad and Pandit Nehru. This is traditionally the most popular method of welcoming a guest and seems to have been introduced by the Mughals. Hundreds of small boats known in Kashmir as parindahs are gaily decorated with costly rugs and multi-coloured buntings; the paddlers or the oarsmen are

also dressed in their gay best; buntings and arches displaying costly fabrics are hung across the river and the buildings on both the banks of Jhelum are also decorated with costly clothes, buntings and fast-coloured rugs; the fleet of shikaras is accompanied by numerous bands and flutemen; then there is also a display of fire works. The scene is really one of great pageantry and ecstasy. The people of Srinagar are traditionally great picnickers and I think as a whole they have no match as such anywhere in the sub-continent. The show attracts almost the entire population of the city which in 1944 exceeded three lakhs. August is the peak month of the tourist flow who come from all parts of the globe. One can imagine the beauty and colour when people drawn from so many countries and cultures and clad in diverse costumes ranging from the captivating dress of the Panditanees and the 'Kasaba' of Kashmiri Muslim ladies to the graceful saries of the Indians, the convenient Kamiz-shalwar of the Punjabis and skirts of the Europeans, mingle in a large sea of humanity.

The procession started from Chhattabal, the extreme end of the city, and had to wend its way under seven bridges spread over many miles before it was to terminate at the Bund. In the barge with Pandit Nehru, Maulana Azad, Abdul Ghaffar Khan and Abdus Samad Khan Achakzai, sat Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, Mrs. Indira Gandhi, Shrimati Mridula Sarabhai and Mr. Asaf Ali. The Muslim Conference had already announced its opposition to the procession being taken out through the localities where it was dominant and had made no secret that they were determined to stage a peaceful hostile demonstration to record the solidarity of Kashmiri Muslims with the All India Muslim League and its demand for Pakistan. The National Conference leadership was fully aware of the strength that Mir Waiz Mohammad Yusuf Shah commanded in some of these localities, but took no notice partly because they had, without proper thought, already made a public announcement about the procession and a retreat would have meant loss of face and partly because they depended too much upon their superior force and the likely support that the pro-Congress Dogra House was expected to extend.

The procession started at 7 p.m. instead of 5-30 p.m. as scheduled. It was spear-headed by Bakhshi Ghulam Mohammad, who was piloting a massive fleet of gaily-decorated shikaras. Incidentally, it may be stated here that the entire community of boatmen in Srinagar have been among the staunchest supporters of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, irrespective of his political opinions. Hundreds of volunteers outflanked the procession. The hostile demonstration started from below Safakadal. Huge banners had been hung across the river carrying the slogans of "Pakistan Zindabad", "Muslim League Zindabad" and "Quaid-e-Azam Zindabad". Thousands of Muslims of both sexes and of all ages were

present on either side of the river carrying black flags. When the procession reached Safakadal, they were met by a huge demonstration with hundreds of black flags fluttering in the air. Some demonstrators also displayed their shoes which, in the eastern fashion, means a show of contempt. There was also some stone-throwing. This continued while the procession wended its way through Kundjee, Khanqah-e-Sokhta, Nawa Kadal, Sahyar, Reshi Sahib, Aali Kadal, Maharajganj, Badshah, Garhiyal and Zainakadal. The demonstration was the noisest at Maharajganj, Badshah and Garhiyal. Among the slogans raised were "Maulana Ha Ha" and "Nehru Murdabad". Stone-throwing was indulged in at many other places too and some people in the boats were consequently injured; among them was Bakhshi Ghulam Mohammad, whose right foot suffered a fracture. According to National Conference circles, some demonstrators took off their clothes and staged a nude dance. According to Martand, many shoes were hurled at the boat carrying Pandit Nehru and Maulana Azad. According to the same paper, a necklace of old shoes was dropped in the boat carrying Maulana Azad from over the bridge at Aalikadal. Seventy six persons were injured as a result of clashes that took place between the two factions both during the progress of the procession and after it ended at the Bund. Those who had minor injuries are not included in this list. Sixty persons were arrested, the majority of whom consisted of Muslim Conference workers. Among them was Khawaja Abdus Salam Dalal who, alongwith Qureshi Mohammad Yusuf, Maulvi Mohammad Amin and Mir Abdul Aziz (Comrade), was responsible for the organisation of the demonstration. It was said that about five thousand people went back to their homes without their shoes as the same had been hurled on the procession. Among those injured was Pandit Shambo Nath, a hawker of the Raina News Agency. An artificial arch collapsed near Amirakadal only moments after the shikara carrying the principal guests had passed beneath it. It was alleged that it was brought about by the followers of Mir Waiz Yusuf Shah but the allegation was promptly denied. Posters denouncing the Congress and supporting the demand for Pakistan were distributed all over the city.

In a public meeting held in Hazoori Bagh at the termination of the procession, an address of welcome was presented to the Congress leaders. Addressing the meeting Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan said:—

> "Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah is the gift of God. If you don't follow him, you will be humiliated."

After the procession dispersed, the National Conference workers resorted to goondaism and a reign of terror was let loose all over the city. The demonstration, and especially its formidable strength, had unbalanced

its leadership. It had exposed their claim of universal mass support in the eyes not only of Congress leaders but before a large number of press reporters from far and wide. Many shops were looted, notable among them being those of Haji Ahmedullah and Haji Mohammad Haqaq. Qureshi Mohammad Yusuf, General Secretary of the Muslim Conference was dragged from a tonga and so severely beaten that he had to be hospitalised for over a month. Chaudhry Mohammad Abdullah Khan Bhalli, President of the Provincial Muslim Conference, Jammu, and Professor Mohammad Ishaque Qureshi who were travelling with Mr. Qureshi, also received a few kicks and were driven to Maharajganj Police station where they were released when their identity became known. A National Conference worker Mr. Salam Darzi who was injured in the clashes, later succumbed to his injuries. The National Conference took out a funeral procession and buried him at Mazar-e-Shohada.

It may be mentioned here that a year earlier when Quaid-e-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah visited Srinagar on the invitation of both the political parties, the Government refused permission to bring out a river procession. It may be emphasised again that the permission was refused despite the fact that he was the guest of both the parties. The National Conference organ "Khidmat" alleged that both Mr. Faizullah Khan the Magistrate on duty (an elder brother of Ch. Hameedullah Khan) and Sheikh Abdul Karim, A.S.P. who later retired as Inspector General of Police, Azad Kashmir, helped the demonstrators.

Where does the blame for the untoward incidents resulting from the demonstrations factually rest? Let me quote an organ basically unfriendly towards Muslims, namely, the daily "Martand" which wrote:

> "From Safa Kadal to Zaina Kadal the National Conference tried to erect gates on ghats though not a single supporter of the Party resides there; consequently, because of their pressure and obstinacy, the supporters of the Muslim Conference were injured and finally near Aalikadal, the National Conference supporters attacked the Muslim Conference supporters and when they could not succeed due to the majority of the latter, they ran towards Zaina Kadal where they were joined by another group of their party and jointly they looted the shop of Haji Mohammad Haqaq, on account of which all shops between Khanqah-e-Mualla and Chhatabal were closed."

The newspaper again wrote in an editorial on 3rd August:—

> "To stage a hostile demonstration on account of political disagreement is not an offence under the law of the land but on the other hand

every citizen enjoys this right on account of the freedom of expression.......However, whatever has happened, was bad but can the responsibility be fairly placed on the Muslim Conference or the National Conference? In our view the responsibility lies squarely on the shoulders of the Government........ The procession had to begin at 7 p.m. while serious clashes between the two parties began from 12 noon, no arrangements were made during the interval of seven hours ......Even now the process of beating continues but no steps have been taken to put a stop to these activities. This is the mirror which clearly reflects the policies and the expediencies of the Government."

Maulana Azad retired to Gulmarg and did not attend any function anywhere in the State.

The National Conference leaders had impressed upon Pandit Nehru the "difficulties" they were experiencing with Muslim masses on account of the non-Muslims continued aloofness from the Party. On the other hand, the non-Muslim leaders placed before him, their "grievances" against Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah and dubbed him a "communalist" as understood in Congress terminology. The nationalist Nehru gladly accepted the request of the rabidly-communal Pandit organistion, Yovak Sabha, to present him an address of welcome. The meeting was held at Shitalnath, Srinagar on 7th August where, in course of his speech, Nehru said:—

> "If non-Muslims want to live in Kashmir, they should join the National Conference or bid good-bye to the country. The National Conference is the real national organisation and even if a single Hindu does not become its member, it will continue to be so. If Pandits do not join it, no safeguards and weightages will protect them."[1]

It had no effect and Hindus continued to remain aloof.

A few days later, the annual session of the Jammu and Kashmir National Conference was held at Sopore. Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah had been elected President for the ensuing year. A Reception Committee was elected at a meeting of the district workers about two months earlier with Soofi Mohammad Akbar as Chairman and this writer as General Secretary. A few days before the session, this writer received an urgent summon from Mujahid Manzil and on presenting myself

1 Freedom Struggle, p. 248.

there, was directed by Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah to proceed to Gulmarg to extend formal invitations to Pandit Nehru, Maulana Azad and Mr. Asaf Ali for participation in the session. I met Pandit Nehru in Tangmarg, a hill resort about four to five miles below Gulmarg on way to Srinagar and the last vehicular post then on way to the latter. Pandit Ji readily and smilingly accepted the invitation and promised to attend the session on the last day. I then went to Gulmarg and presented myself at the bungalow where Maulana Azad, attended by Mr. Asaf Ali, was staying. About a dozen Hindu ladies from Hyderabad, Sind, heavily ornamented, were already waiting in the verandah where I also took my seat. A few minutes later, Mr. Asaf Ali came out and was told by the ladies that they had come for a "darshan" of the Rashtrapati. I conveyed the purpose of my visit. After a few minutes a door opened and Maulana Azad emerged out in the verandah, bare-headed, wearing a Yarkandi gown. I was deeply impressed by his personality and with his trimmed beard and moustache, he really looked grand. The ladies immediately sprang up to their feet and, after Hindu fashion, bent themselves a little with folded hands to pay their respects to the Congress President. After a minute or so, they withdrew without turning their backs towards the Rashtrapati. Maulana Sahib then retired to his room, making a gesture to me to follow him. I conveyed the formal invitation but he expressed his inability to attend the session stating that he had come for reasons of health and would therefore like to be left undisturbed.

The annual session started with an impressive procession. The number of delegates was very large but the great majority belonged to the Valley and were Muslims. They were housed in tents outside the town in a large maidan. Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan and Khan Abdus Samad Khan Achakzai attended the whole session and stayed with the delegates. Pandit Nehru came on the 5th, accompanied by his daughter, Mridula Sarabhai, Mirza Mohammad Afzal Beg, then P.W.D. Minister, and Mian Iftikhar-ud-Din, his host. There was no formal procession. He was brought straight to the Hurriyat Nagar, the name given to the camping ground of the delegates and introduced to most of them. He had a chat with a group of students who were also participating in the conference. Later he was taken to the Rest House at Doabgah, about three to four miles from Sopore on the banks of Lidder. Here another big stream meets Lidder and that is why it is known as Doabgah; both are tributaries of Jhelum. Timber extracted from the forests in Handwara tehsil used to be floated down from Doabgah. It did not appear in the press and is known to few people that after addressing the session late at night, when Mr. Nehru returned to the Rest House, a small but vital bridge on the way was found damaged and Pandit Nehru had a narrow escape. The matter was hushed up by both the authorities as well as the National Conference circles for obvious

reasons. It is actually not known who was responsible for it but rumours current at the time linked anti-National Conference elements with the incident.

When Pandit Nehru entered the pendal, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah himself raised slogans of Pandit Nehru Ki Jai. In their speeches Pandit Nehru and Khan Abdul Ghaffar paid generous tribute to Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah's qualities of leadership. Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan said smilingly that when before 1931 he visited Kashmir, he was shocked to see people frightened even by the appearance of a constable but now, sarcastically referring to recent stone-throwing in Srinagar, "the Muslims of Kashmir were so brave that they could even hurl stones".

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CHAPTER INDEX

CHAPTER XVII

The Communist—Socialist Tussle

It was July, 1946. Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah and his colleagues were in jail in connection with the Quit Kashmir Movement. In Srinagar one gloomy morning, a deputation from Skardu came to the Muslim Conference Headquarters. This writer was then Acting General Secretary of the Party. A few weeks earlier we had received distressing reports of a sudden Shia-Sunni flare-up in the Northern region resulting in damage to a dozen mosques and injuries to about two dozen Muslims. The mystery was solved by the deputationists who revealed that twenty two bearded "Ulema" had crossed into the region from a neighbouring Soviet republic. Eleven represented themselves as Shias while the rest claimed to be Sunnis. They spoke local dialects and by steadily inciting the two sects, created a situation which ultimately led to open clashes. It has to be remembered that the region was then extremely backward and even now has a wholly orthodox and superstitious population. Literacy was not even one percent. In the ensuing confusion, the Soviet "Ulema" made good their escape.

Organised communist activity in the State dates back to 1939 when the Soviet-Western alliance enabled international communism to extend its sphere of influence by lawful means. That year some leading Indian communists, such as Mr. P.C. Joshi and Fazal Elahi Qurban, visited Srinagar and the first known political leader indoctrinated was Khawaja Ghulam Mohammad Sadiq, then a member of the State Legislative Assembly. He was soon "honoured" by being invited to preside over the annual session of the communist-dominated All India Students Federation, probably held at Patna.

Soon afterwards, Mr. B.P.L. Bedi and his illustrious English wife Freda, then herself a communist, the former has now reportedly been attracted by Sufiism while the latter has reportedly accepted Buddhism, were deputed to *Srinagar*. They were easily successful in creating a wide circle of friends and admirers. Their initial success was so astonishing that they were permanently accredited to Kashmir by the Politburo at Bombay. By the end of 1942, besides a large number of workers at lower level, Ghulam Mohi-ud-Din Kara, Durga Prasad Dhar and Ghirdhari Lal Dogra in the National Conference, as well as some people from outside, had been won over to the Communist cause.

Mr. Sadiq then visited Bombay and had extensive talks with communist leaders. His return was followed by lengthy conferences, spread over two weeks; they decided against the formation of a separate party and instead resolved to continue in the National Conference. They also decided to "capture" the students and labour, a universal communist technique. At that time industrial labour existed in Srinagar only. Communists penetrated therein and, in a very short time, were in full control. Today the labour organisation has spread all over the State and communists are its undisputed masters. They decided against the formation of an independent party because the National Conference itself provided them with a powerful platform which they hoped to capture eventually. The people of Kashmir—Hindus and Muslims alike—being deeply religious, it was also considered expedient to approach them from a back door. Then there was the all-prevailing personality of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, against whom Sadiq and the kind he represented had no chance. A top socialist leader, then absconding, probably Achhut Patwardhan, who was hiding in Srinagar, was spotted out by the communists and got arrested in Rawalpindi while escaping towards the plains. There was a plan for the visit of Mr. Jai Prakash Narain and Shrimati Aruna Asaf Ali perhaps to attempt escape from the sub-continent but these plans could not materialise because of the growing communist presence in the State.

The situation was very grave. Many Rightist leaders got alarmed. They included Mirza Afzal Beg, Pandit Kayshup Bandhu, Mr. Mohammad Shafi and Pandit Shyam Lal Saraf. The anti-communist campaign that followed was brilliantly conducted by Pandit Kashi Nath Bamzai, a Srinagar lawyer and lately of "Blitz", Bombay. This writer has never known a Hindu leader except Satya Bushan, more genuine in his profession of nationalism. Highly refined and intelligent, he was fully aware of communist tactics. He had a lovable personality and the more a man got nearer him, the more one felt convinced of his sincerity.

We met, by coincidence, at a students' meeting in Srinagar in December, 1943. Later, we convened a meeting of more enthusiastic anti-communist workers and resolved to have a separate organisation, which was named the "Kashmir Youth Congress" and of which this writer was elected President. Its primary purpose was to counteract growing communist influence. Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah was sympathetic and gave his blessings.

That was the winter of 1943-44. Mr. K. M. Munshi, later Governor of Uttar Pradesh, Professor Kumarapa of the All India Spinners Association, Mr. Huthi Singh, Shrimati Mridula Sarabhai, Shrimati Indira Gandhi, Shrimati Krishna Nehru and a host of other top ranking Congress leaders came to Srinagar in the 1944 summer. Members of the Youth Congress explained the situation to them and all of them, save the last three, felt agitated. The latter, however, were of the view that in the presence of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, there was no danger of Communist expansion. This view was also largely shared by Pandits Kayshup Bandhu and Shyam Lal Saraf.

Deeply moved by the situation, anti-communist elements in the National Conference came closer and grouped into a strong wing which later came to be known as the Socialist wing of the Conference. Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, Mirza Afzal Beg and Maulana Mohammad Saeed Masudi were its sympathisers. The wing had no constitutional link with the Indian Socialist Party but followed its policy on All India matters.

By the end of 1944, the position had somewhat improved. Communists had been ejected from college and school unions. In the National Conference itself their position had considerably weakened. But labour was neglected by the Socialists and Communists continued to enjoy supremacy in this field. Sheikh Abdullah too had by then grown very suspicious of Communist ends. At a workers' meeting in Srinagar, he tore into pieces a copy of their Party organ "People's War" and threatened to expel them if they continued to sell it instead of the N.C. organ "Daily Khidmat". In a speech, delivered at the Sopore session of the National Conference on the last day, Sheikh Sahib accused communist visitors of taking undue advantage of the hospitality extended by his Party; Sadiq and Bedis silently slipped away from the pendal. In the meantime, the National Conference started publishing a weekly English edition of "Daily Khidmat" with the socialist Pandit Janki Nath Zutshi as its Editor. The Communists did not take kindly to his appointment.

The first anti-communist students conference was held on 30th September, 1944, at Pathar Masjid under the presidentship of Raja Mohammad

Akbar Khan, a top ranking leader from Mirpur, as a part of the National Conference annual session. The Communist wing was very angry with Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah for having permitted the holding of a pronouncedly anti-communist conference as part of the Party's annual session but had to swallow the bitter pill as they had no other alternative. The next annual session was held on 12th July, 1945, in Srinagar under the presidentship of one Mr. Taj Mohammad Khan, a Congress leader from the N.W.F.P. Inaugurated by Sheikh Mohmmmad Abdullah, it was attended, among others, by Mrs. Indira Gandhi. Actually it was to be presided over by Professor N.G. Ranga, very unpopular with the Communists those days; this writer had proceeded to Delhi, where a meeting of the All India Students Congress Working Committee of which he was a member, was also taking place, to invite the Professor. In Delhi I received a telegram from my Srinagar colleagues informing me of the postponement of the Conference. When I returned back on the eve of the Conference without the Professor and showed them the telegram, it transpired that it was fake and must have been sent by the communists. Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru, who had been recently released from Ahmednagar fort, sent a warm message of good wishes wherein he said that Kashmir was fortunate in having a great and wise leader like Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah. Sheikh Sahib paid generous tribute to the patriotism of Indian Socialists and condemned the Communists for their extra-territorial loyalties.

The Communist Student Movement was spear-headed by Syed Mir Qasim, later Chief Minister, Mr. Moti Lal Misri, later General Secretary of Sadiq's Democratic National Conference in late fifties, Mr. Nasir Ahmad, the younger brother of Miss Mahmooda Ahmad of the Free Thinkers' Society and now Principal of the Srinagar Medical College and Pandit Pran Nath Jalali, later Private Secretary to Karan Singh. Among the prominent anti-Communist student leaders were Mr. Hardey Nath Nehru, Mr. Durga Nath Kachru, Mr. Someshwar, Mr. Anupam Dhar, Amar Singh, two Punjabi-speaking men, one of whom owned a shop in Amirakadal and the most impressive of them all, Mr. Satya Bushan, later, Vice Chancellor of the Mahatma Gandhi University, Jammu and now Education Commissioner of the Jammu and Kashmir Government. The son of an Arya Samajist lawyer from Poonch, Mr. Satya Bushan's nationalism left nothing more to be desired. An incident showing the intensity of the ideological war between the two groups may be mentioned here. After having lost elections everywhere, the Communists concentrated on Union election in Amarsingh College, the premier and the only Government Degree College in Kashmir valley. Originally they sought to put up a well-known communist girl student as their candidate. It was apparent that only a girl candidate from the Socialist wing could defeat her; they

thereupon successfully persuaded Miss Vidya Madan, daughter of Pandit Madan, Principal S.P. College, and incidentally the uncontested Beauty Queen of the College, to enter the race. She won.

The Muslim students had their own organisation, the Musilim Students Federation. Almost all of them subscribed to its membership because as educated men, they were apt to look on political issues from an All India angle. In October, 1942, the Muslim Students Union held a meeting at Islamia High School premises Srinagar under the presidentship of Doctor Soofi to welcome Sheikh Usman Woo, a leader of the Chinese Muslims who was then touring India. In an address of welcome drafted by Mr. Yusuf Bachh, the old ties existing between the people of Kashmir and those of China and the visits of numerous travellers, were recounted. The meeting was also attended by Doctor Taseer and Professor Mahmood Ahmad. The address of welcome was read by Mr. Khurshid Hassan, Secretary of the Union. Mr. Woo also visited Mujahid Manzil and had a meeting with Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah. Anjuman-e-Nusratul Islam gave a reception in his honour which was attended by Mir Waiz Mohammad Yusuf Shah. A conference of Muslim students was held in Srinagar on 17th June, 1944. It had the unique distinction of being the only studetns' meeting in the State ever addressed by the Quaid-e-Azam. He advised them to keep an eye on national and international scene and spend part of their vacations in villages doing social-uplift work. The third annual session was held on 31st May, 1945 under the presidentship of Chaudhri Ghulam Abbas Khan. Mr. Khurshid Ahmad Malik was Chairman of the Reception Committee. Chaudhry Sultan Ali, later leader of the Opposition in the Azad Kashmir Assembly, and Mr. Sultan Mohammad were the prominent student leaders in Jammu.

The student organisations were provincial in character and existed independently both in Kashmir valley as well as in Jammu province. Among the office bearers of the Muslim Students Federation in Kashmir valley from time to time, were: Mr. K. H. Khurshid, Mr. Ghulam Mohammad, Mir Abdul Aziz, now Editor, Weekly "Insaf", Khawaja Sana Ullah Shamim and Mr. A.U. Raina.

KISAN MAZDOOR CONFERENCE

In 1943, Pandit Prem Nath Bazaz floated "The Kashmir Socialist Party". The only other member of any consequence was Pandit Kanhaya Lal Kaul, a pleader from Sopore. Despite having the support of the State's most powerful newspaper, it was not able to make any head-way, whatsoever. It mainly existed in the columns of Hamdard.

In July, 1945 Pandit Bazaz thought the time opportune for floating a mass political organisation. A meeting, was therefore, convened on 19th July at Achhabal garden of about a dozen workers who decided to form "The All Jammu and Kashmir Kisan Conference". Khawaja Abdus Salam Yatu, a young matriculate peasant from village Khushipura, district Islamabad, was voted President. Branches were opened in some villages in Islamabad district. On 16th November, a clash took place between its workers and those of the National Conference, resulting in the prosecution of its sixteen workers including its President, Mr. Habibullah, the Vice-President and Mr. Ghulam Ahmad Naz, Secretary, The clash took place at Kabamarg, a village seven miles to the south of Islamabad. The Party's first annual session was held at the same place on 11th, 12th and 13th May, 1946. It was preceded by a joint meeting of twenty six workers and leaders including Pandit Bazaz, Kanhaya Lal Kaul, Yatu, Habibullah, Naz and Mir Noor Mohammad.

The Conference was preceded by what was termed as a Congress of peasants and labourers held at village Dyalgam. It was addressed, amongst others, by Pandit Prem Nath Bazaz. In fact it was an attempt to test their strength and prepare for the proposed bigger conference. A clash again took place between its workers and those of the National Conference resulting in injuries to several persons. At the same time, Mirza Mohammad Afzal Beg, who had already resigned from the Cabinet, addressed a rally of National Conference workers. It was claimed by daily "Hamdard" that an unnamed peasant woman placed her Qasaba, the head-wear of Kashimiri women, on his head as a demonstration of the peasants' contempt for his Party.

The Conference at Kabamarg held on 11th, 12th and 13th May, 1946 passed off without any untoward incident; the reason being that the National Conference had already launched its Quit Kashmir Movement. The Conference attracted a large number of peasants from the district. It demanded the abolition of Jagirs and absentee landlordism without compensation; it expressed its determination "to end exploitation of man by man, after over-throw of the feudal and capitalist regime". In another resolution, it expressed the "solidarity of the State working classes with the workers of the world" and yet in another one, the tillers of the soil were called upon not to take the place of any tenant who was ejected by a landlord without valid reasons. The Party constitution was also adopted. Pandit Prem Nath Bazaz was asked to prepare a comprehensive manifesto explaining its aims and objects. As he was arrested a few months later and released in 1950, the manifesto could not be published earlier. It has since been published in the form of a book

entitled "Azad Kashmir". The Party was renamed as the All Jammu and Kashmir Kisan Mazdoor Conference.

The presidential address read by Mr. Abdus Salam Yatu was presumably written by Pandit Prem Nath Bazaz. In course of the address, Mr. Yatu said:—

"Till now the upper classes exploited us because we were not clear about our goal but they find that such expolitation is not possible in future. Freedom for us means establishment of a new social order in our country which knows no exploitation and guarantees equal social, economic and political status for all. Our movement aims at affording all opportunities and facilities to the toiling masses here in our country which a man is entitled to. The upper classes have raised communal slogans so that the masses are misled in the name of religion. Also with a view to preserve their vested interests, the upper classes have founded parties in the name of the nation and the country. The toiling masses have nothing to do either with communal barriers or nationalist prejudice. We are against all distinctions based on colour, creed or race. We believe in a society free from the evils of landlordism, capitalism and feudalism and opposed to exploitation of man by man.

Our movement is world-wide. Hundreds of millions of the toiling masses in the world are associated with it. It is bound to succeed sooner or later. If we organise ourselves and march unitedly towards our goal, we can establish the society of our conception sooner than expected."[1]

Although the Freedom Movement did not take any agitational shape in the sense understood by the term, between 1939 to May 1946, the movement for reforms and the demand for the setting up of a Responsible Government continued unabated. The Government, on its part, also continued to pursue its repressive policy. Khawaja Abdus Salam Dalal, Khawaja Mohammad Amin and Khawaja Mohammad Khan were arrested in 1940 on the charge of having organised demonstrations at the time of Nehru's visit and challaned in the Court of A.D.M. The same year Maulvi Ghulam Haider Jandalvi and some of his colleagues in Poonch were called upon to give security for good behaviour for a period of one year and not able to do so immediately, were sent to jail. Khawaja Ghulam Rasool Bhadarwahi, Sardar Gauhar Rahman and A.R. Saghar were interned within the municipal limits of Jammu. Khawaja Ghulam Ahmad Butt

1. Freedom Struggle, p.

and Khawaja Ghulam Qadir, workers of the National Conference in Poonch, were arrested in July, 1941. Mr. Mohammad Maqbool Sherwani and comrade Sant Singh, leaders of the National Conference in Baramula and Chikar respectively, were arrested in May, 1942. In June, 1942, while on a tour of Kotli and Mirpur, Chaudhri Ghulam Abbas and Mr. A.R. Saghar were served with notices under rule 24 of the Defence Rules requiring them to leave the district within 24 hours and forbidding their entry for six months. On 15th and 16th Magh, 2000 (Bikrami), the Sikhs of Kanahmori and Kotari Najam Khan in Poonch caught hold of certain Muslims on the allegation of having tried to kill a buffalo and paraded them for three miles, with shoes hanging around their necks. Instead of punishing those who had taken the law into their own hands, the Government rushed military and armed police from Naushehra and Srinagar to overawe Muslims. Detachments of troops were sent to Poonch in 1945 to make a show of force in various areas. Military camps were set up at Dharmsala Jhangar, Hajira, Rawalakot, Bagh and Pallandari. On 30th November, 1945, an order was served upon A.R. Saghar and Maulvi Mohammad Hussain under rule 24 of the Defence Rules forbidding them from making any public speech for three months. In December 1944, an order was served on Khawaja Abdus Salam Dalal forbidding him from making any speech for six months.

MUSLIM UNITY TALKS AGAIN FAIL

At the end of the World War, the first effort made by the British Government for a political settlement in the sub-continent for the transfer of power was the convening of the Simla Conference. It foundered on the refusal of the Congress to recognise the All India Muslim League as the sole representative of Muslims. It was, therefore, apparent that the question of their conflicting claims of representation could finally and properly be decided only by a reference to the electorate. Consequently elections to the Central and Provincial Assemblies were held in 1945-46 winter. All 33 Muslim seats in the Central Legislature were captured by the Muslim League. In the provincial elections, the League captured more than ninety percent seats and the only Muslim majority province where Congress was able to secure a majority and formed an exclusively Congress Ministry was the N.W.F.P. The elections thus inflicted a stunning blow on the Congress claims of representing Muslims and made it clear that there could be no transfer of power without a prior agreement with the Muslim League. As Muslim League had fought elections on the issue of Pakistan and Congress and its supporters on the issue of a united India, it was also clear that no scheme for the transfer of power which did not visualise either out-right partition or at-least something better than the Cripps plan, could be acceptable to the Muslim League. The natural

effect of the astounding victory of the Muslim League on the political climate in Jammu and Kashmir was a weakening of the National Conference and what is more important, deepening of Muslim hostility towards any collaboration between it and the Indian National Congress. Even the rank and file of the National Conference, barring a few individuals, publicly acclaimed the success of the Muslim League. Their approach both private and public was that while they acknowledged Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah as their leader "upto Kohala," to use the term as was then popularly used, beyond Kohala they were ardent supporters of Muslim League and all that it cherished, fought and stood for. It was a common sight to find the photographs of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah and those of Allama Iqbal and Quaid-e-Azam hanging side by side in the houses or business premises of supporters of the National Conference. Obviously, the National Conference High Command had to take due notice of this position and could not afford to ignore its implications.

By a strange coincidence, differences between the National Conference and the Kashmir Government started widening. Sometime after dyarchy was introduced, Pandit Ram Chandra Kak succeeded Sir B.N. Rao as Prime Minister. The National Conference had no direct hand in his appointment but it was no secret that they had made known to the Maharaja through his constitutional and private advisers like Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and Mr. Brij Lal Nehru as well as loyalists like Wazir Ganga Ram, that it was time that the practice of importing Prime Ministers from outside was discarded. There is also no doubt that Kak whose principal ambition at the moment was to have the singular distinction of being the first Kashmiri to get the top post in the administration, may have subtly manipulated its support because his appointment was welcomed as a step in the right direction. It is possible that the Party expected a better awareness on the part of a local like Mr. Kak, of the problems confronting the State and the necessity of widening the sphere of co-operation between the Government and itself; unfortunately their hopes were belied and within a few months in office, the authoritarian and autocratic attitude adopted by Mr. Kak administered them a rude shock. The shrewd Pandit was no better a bureaucrat than the worst in the tradition who considered himself as the fountain of all authority and had neither the patience nor the vision of accommodating others' point of view. Kak considered himself as the second most powerful man in the State and taking undue advantage of being a local, thought of substituting the politicians in the field. This resulted in estrangement between him and Beg. By this time, the experiment of dyarchy had destroyed the hopes that it had given birth to. Wazir Ganga Ram was a popular Minister only in name. Both by profession and practice, he was a blind supporter of Dogra Raj. This writer had

several interviews with him and can speak from personal experience that whenever he had to refer to Maharaja Hari Singh, he reverently spoke of him as "Sri Sarkar-e-Wala Madar". Thus in a cabinet of five, including the Prime Minister, the single voice of Mirza Afzal Beg carried no weight; in the later phase, he was almost invariably out-voted. The National Conference then demanded the portfolios of Education, Panchayat and Co-operatives but Kak would not give in. The position of the National Conference can be compared with that of the Muslim League in the Central Assembly after the League's entry into the Interim Government. Being in a minority in the cabinet, the League declined to give legislative support to every measure. In fact it functioned as the Principal Opposition. It did not accept the principle of collective responsibility because there was no such responsibility so far as the Cabinet was concerned. The National Conference Assembly Party took the same attitude and functioned as an opposition group in the legislature. Just as Nehru later demanded support of the Government policies by the Muslim League Assembly Party on the ground of it being represented on the Cabinet, Kak demanded support for the Government policies by the National Conference Assembly Party and strongly opposed their functioning as an opposition group. This had already brought matters to a point of no return. It was at this stage that Mirza Mohammad Afzal Beg told the Cabinet that as a popular Minister responsible to a political party and outvoted in the Cabinet by a brute majority, very often deliberately so, he was not in a position to vote for every Government measure in the legislature and, therefore, claimed the right to vote on every measure on its merits and according to the dictates of his conscience. Naturally, this position was not acceptable to Pandit Ram Chandra Kak; he did not care any longer, it seems, for the continued co-operation of the National Conference even if it was limited to the farce of Mr. Beg's association with the Government. On his part, Maharaja Hari Singh never had a friendly disposition towards Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah; on the contrary he had reasons to be hateful of him. Kak was close to Hari Singh or rather it may be more appropriate to say that Hari Singh was under the spell of this astute Pandit; otherwise it was not possible for a librarian in a despotic State to rise to the top post in the administration. It seems that the common ground between the two was the destruction not only of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah but also of all popular movements for constitutional reforms. The fact of Kak's being a local which gave him far greater manoeuvrability than an outsider, had endeared him in the eyes of his employer. To begin with, he could instantly rely upon the support of the Pandit community which dominated the administration. Mr. Beg, therefore, had no honourable course left open but to tender his resignation which he did on 18th March, 1946 on the opening day of the budget session of the Assembly at Jammu.

Months before the resignation of Mirza Mohammad Afzal Beg, the National Conference High Command again initiated a dialogue with the Muslim Conference leaders for an understanding. It is not the whole truth to condemn them as having been hard pressed by circumstances to do so and not to give them some credit for again taking the initiative. It has been very rightly said that in politics the last word is never said and to deny them even an iota of sincerity in the matter of this initiative and self-righteously rush to the judgment that it was seeking co-operation simply out of "weakness", is, to say the least, highly uncharitable. That National Conference had been weakened by the impact of Indian political scene goes without saying but to advance the imaginary comparative weakness of National Conference as against the Muslim Conference is prima facie repudiated by the fact that the same weak party was only eight to nine months later able to launch a gigantic struggle resulting in the imprisonment of thousands and the killing of atleast twenty persons. Such an analysis of the situation on the eve of these talks cannot, therefore, be considered dispassionate, objective or unbiased. The first public indication of the talks came from weekly 'Javed' owned and edited by Mr. A.R. Saghar. It carried the following news in its issue dated 2nd August, 1945:—

> "Our special representative informs that Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah made an attempt to start negotiations with the Muslim Conference through the courtesy of Mr. Abdul Majid Qarshi, Editor "Jamhoor" and that he tried to initiate the talks by contacting Mr. A.R. Saghar. It is also learnt that Mr. Saghar told him that unless he had authority from the President of the National Conference, it was no use to enter into any such talks."

This news is very important because it shows that even before the Congress leaders Pandit Nehru and Maulana Azad were taken out in a river procession in Srinagar in 1945, the National Conference *had* made an effort to come to an understanding with the Muslim Conference. The timing of the initiative also shows that the National Conference leadership wanted an understanding with its counterpart before Pandit Nehru had the opportunity of making further inroads while on a visit to Kashmir. Unfortunately the attitude adopted by the Muslim Conference was negative.

Another effort was made, again by the National Conference, in January, 1946. This time lengthy discussions *were* held in Jammu. The National Conference was represented by Bakhshi Ghulam Mohammad, Mirza Mohammad Afzal Beg and Khawaja Ghulam Mohammad Sadiq. As

to who conducted the talks on behalf of the Muslim Conference is not clear from any record. In his autobiography, Chaudhri Ghulam Abbas does not throw any light on the matter while Mr. Saghar told this writer that the talks were conducted largely by him. If it was so, it was an ominous beginning because Mr. Saghar and the National Conference negotiators were not popular with each other; on the contrary, their mutual dislike bordered on hatred. Mr. Saghar has never been popular with Kashmiri-speaking Muslims and his own hatred of Kashmiris in general and that of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah in particular has been so total that he has himself admitted to me of it being unreasonable and sometimes undeserved. This writer had the opportunity of extensive discussions with him first during a month's comradeship in Central jail, Rawalpindi, in 1958, and later, after our withdrawal from politics. While Kashmiri-speaking circles generally held belief of his being inherently biased against them due to political reasons cannot be altogether dismissed as propaganda, it remains a fact that his party has not done him justice, otherwise he should not have been compelled to become, in his last years, a paper-vendor to earn his livelihood. It does no credit to a people still not even half-way in their struggle for freedom. However, irrespective of the fact as to whether this mutual hatred was justified on either side or whether, as generally happens, truth was the monopoly of neither side, the choice of the negotiators was unhappy. It goes without saying that in case of differences between two parties or two countries, it is only at the summit level that the chances of an understanding are bright.

What was the basis of the talks? So far as National Conference is concerned, its version is still unknown as none of them has, so far, to the knowledge of this writer, spoken publicly about it. Mr. Saghar does not now remember the details but he generally agrees with the account left by Chaudhri Ghulam Abbas Khan in his autobiography. According to this account, the National Conference leaders had accepted the position that their party had failed to attract non-Muslims and that they should, therefore, join Muslim Conference but at the time of final announcement, they found that the negotiators of the National Conference did not enjoy the support of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah. Nothing is directly mentioned in the book as to whether the negotiators also discussed the question of the launching of a movement against the Dogra Government but from the Muslim Conference Working Committee resolution also quoted in the book, no doubt is left that the issue was actively considered though the Muslim Conference naturally conditioned its participation in such a movement by a prior political agreement between the two parties. About one thing, there should be no doubt, namely, that the National Conference leaders could never have initiated the talks unless asked to do so by

Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah and any terms that did not have prior approval of their leader, could never have been agreed to by them. It was a party with great discipline and Sheikh Abdullah was unmistakably its Boss.

Why then did the National Conference abandon the self-launched boat just when it was about to touch the shore? In the absence of direct evidence, one is left to piece together the circumstantial evidence. It is established that the Quaid-e-Azam had not been consulted or kept informed of these developments. Was the Muslim Conference High Command thus afraid of having entered into negotiations without the prior approval of the Father of the Nation? Was it skeptical after the already-mentioned distorted version of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah's speech in Srinagar in June, 1944, and his consequent condemnation by the Father of the Nation in his parting statement as also mentioned earlier, about the reception that such a proposal could evoke from the League High Command? Was it that the Muslim Conference High Command was not prepared to give an undertaking about its participation in the movement against the State Government without a prior approval by Quaid-e-Azam or was it that it was unable to give an undertaking that the launching of such a movement, which itself was the basis of the compromise, would not be vetoed by the League High Command? Unless factual answers are available to these and many other allied questions, it is too early, as a historian, to apportion blame.

THE QUIT KASHMIR MOVEMENT

Soon after the results of elections in the sub-continent were out, the British Government sent a Cabinet Mission to enter into talks with leaders of political parties for evolving an agreed basis for the transfer of power. The Mission consisted of Sir Pathic Lawrence, Mr. Alexander and Sir Stafford Cripps. They arrived in Srinagar on 19th April, returning to New Delhi on the 24th. Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah sent them a memorandum which is partly reproduced below and has come to be known as the "Quit Kashmir Memorandum":—

> "Today the national demand of the people of Kashmir is not merely the establishment of a system of responsible Government, but their right to absolute freedom from the autocratic rule of the Dogra House. Nearly a hundred years ago the people of Kashmir became the victims of a commercial deal by the covetous agents of the East India Company. For the paltry consideration of 75 lacs of Sikh currency rupees (less than half a million pounds sterling) the people of Kashmir, the land and its potential wealth, were sold away to Maharaja Gulab Singh, the Dogra vassal of the Sikh Kingdom.

We challenge the moral and political validity of this sale deed, to which the people of Kashmir were never a party, and which has since 1846 been the document of their bondage.

At this moment, the future of the inhabitants of India is on the anvil, and the constitutional pattern of the future is being hammered out by the British Cabinet Mission. The question of the Treaty rights of the Princes has become a moot point between the peoples of the States, the Princely order, and the Paramount Power. For us in Kashmir the re-examination of this relationship in its historical context is a vital matter.

The crux of our contention is this that the sale deed which brought Kashmir under the rule of the Dogra House confers no privileges equivalent to those claimed by States governed by the so-called Treaty Rights. As such, the case of Kashmir itself stands on a unique footing, and the people of Kashmir draw the attention of the Cabinet Mission to their just claims to freedom on the withdrawal of British Power. The sale deed of 1846, misnamed the Treaty of Amritsar, makes the matter quite clear.

No sale deed, however sacrosanct, can condemn more than four million men and women to the servitude of an autocrat when the will to live under his rule is no longer there. We, the people of Kashmir, are determined to mould our own destiny and we appeal to the members of the Cabinet Mission to recognise the justice and the strength of our Cause.

Kashmir is not merely a geographical expression, in the north-west of the vast sub-continent of India, famed for its beauty and natural wealth, but it is a land strategically situated, the meeting point of India, China and Russia, and as such has an international significance. Our home-land is the cradle of the Kashmiri nation which by virtue of the homogeneity of its language, culture and tradition and its common history of suffering, is today one of the rare places in India where all communities are backing up a united national demand."[1]

Muslim Conference, it may be noted here, did not submit any memorandum to the Mission. Meanwhile Pandit Ram Chandra Kak succeeded in seducing Mian Ahmad Yar, Leader of the National Conference Assembly Party and incidentally its only Punjabi-speaking member, and on 15th April, appointed him Public Works Minister against the seat vacated earlier by Mirza Mohammad Afzal Beg. While it did no credit to Mian Ahmad Yar who had been elected on Party ticket and that too from Srinagar

1. Kashmir on Trial, p.1.

where he commanded no influence at all, it was a frontal attack on the National Conference and clearly indicated the extent of Kak's political ambitions.

On 10th February, 1946, the National Conference Working Committee passed the following resolution at Srinagar:—

"The Working Committee of the Jammu and Kashmir National Conference has taken into consideration the speech made by the Viceroy of India in the Princes' Chamber on the 17th January, 1946, alongwith the declaration made by the Chancellor of the Chamber on behalf of the Princes regarding constitutional advancement in the States. After fully examining the salient points in both the speeches, the Working Committee has come to the following conclusions:—

1. That the advice tendered by the Crown Representative to the Princes regarding the steps to be taken in making the administration of these States progressive did not amount to anything progressive. In fact it lost all its significance when he (Viceroy) made such progress conditional on the maintenance of the treaties and the consent of the Princes. These treaties and engagements which are out-dated, reactionary and questionable, have always stood and will always stand in the way of the States peoples' progress and to think that the rulers will give up their privileged positions that they enjoy under them at their sweet will is nothing but wishful thinking. The National Conference has on several occasions made it clear that these treaties have been made in times and under circumstances which do not obtain now and have been framed without seeking the consent of the States people. Under such circumstances no treaties or engagements which act as a dividing wall between their progress and that of their brethren in British India, can be binding on the people."[1]

While the Mission was in Srinagar, apart from the memorandum detailed earlier, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah as President of the All Jammu and Kashmir National Conference sent them the following telegram:—

"As President, All Jammu and Kashmir National Conference representing all communties and classes of people inhabiting Jammu and Kashmir State, I welcome your visit to our State and hope that it will usher in a new era of freedom both political and economic, for its four million inhabitants. As the Mission is at the moment reviewing relationship of Princes with the Paramount Power with reference to

1. Kashmir on Trial, p. 223

treaty rights we wish to submit *that for us in Kashmir, re-examination of this relationship is a vital matter because a hundred years ago in 1846 land and people of Kashmir were sold away to servitude of Dogra House by the British for seventy-five lacs of Sikh rupees equivalent to fifty lac British Indian rupees.* Then Governor of Kashmir resisted transfer, but was finally subdued with British help. This sale deed of 1846, misnamed treaty of Amritsar, sealed the fate of Kashmir masses. *We declare that it confers no privileges equivalent to those claimed by States governed by treaty rights. As such, case of Kashmir stands on unique footing and people of Kashmir urge upon the Mission their unchallengeable claim to freedom on withdrawal of British power from India. We wish to declare that no sale deed, however sacrosanct, can condemn four million men and women to servitude of an autocrat when will to live under his rule is no longer there.* People of Kashmir are determined to mould their own destiny and we appeal to the Mission to recognise the justice and strength of our Cause."[1]

It was under these circumstances that Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah launched the 'Quit Kashmir' Movement with a highly anti-Government speech at Srinagar on 15th May, 1946. Non-Muslim members of the Working Committee were not consulted as later disclosed by Pandit Kayshup Bandhu; perhaps because it could not carry favour with them. Workers and leaders of the Party immediately responded by taking out processions and holding public meetings, especially in Kashmir valley; in these meetings, the Treaty was read over and explained to the audience who were called upon to prepare themselves for a final struggle to over-throw the Dogra Raj. On 18th May, a minor clash took place in Amirakadal between Muslims and Hindus while a group of National Conference workers was raising anti-Hari Singh slogans. On 19th May, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah suspended the programme of processions and meetings perhaps to ensure that the Government was not able to bring about Hindu-Muslim clashes and thus sabotage the real objectives of the Movement. On 19th and 20th he held a series of meetings with his top colleagues particularly Mirza Mohammad Afzal Beg, Bakhshi Ghulam Mohammad, Maulana Saeed, Khawaja Ghulam Mohammad Sadiq and Khawaja Ghulam Mohi-ud-Din Kara. As a result of these deliberations, Bakhshi Ghulam Mohammad and Khawaja Ghulam Mohammad Sadiq escaped to Lahore incognito; Mirza Mohammad Afzal Beg went to Islamabad to spearhead the Movement there and Khawaja Ghulam Mohi-ud-Din Kara went underground. After these preparations had been completed, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah left by car for the plains with the announced object of consultations with Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru. A Superintendent of

1. Kashmir on Trial, p. 224.

Police armed with a warrant under provisions of the Defence Rules followed him and before he could cross the small town of Garhi Dopatta, a distance of 99 miles from Srinagar, he was arrested and in the darkness of the approaching night, removed to Badami-Bagh cantonment and lodged there. The same night, the Dogra army was despatched under cover of darkness to all strategic points in Srinagar, towns and important villages all over Kashmir valley. Detachments of the army were also rushed to Mirpur, Poonch, Kotli, Bhadarwah, Rajouri and Banihal. When the news of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah's arrest became known, business was suspended by Muslims all over the Valley and processions were taken out to protest against his arrest; they demanded the end of the Dogra rule. Agitational platforms were set up in Khanqah-e-Mualla and Hazratbal in Srinagar and at other places in important towns where people would gather in the evening to hear and applaud the leaders and workers who came forward to offer themselves for arrest. Within twenty four hours of his arrest, printed posters and hand bills appeared announcing the setting up of a War Council with Khawaja Ghulam Mohi-ud-Din Kara as its General Dictator. There were several clashes between the Dogra army and the demonstrators especially at Srinagar, Islamabad and Pampur. According to official figures, twenty Muslims were killed and hundreds wounded as a result of the military firing.[1] The number of those arrested exceeded three thousand. Pandit Kayshup Bandhu, Pandit Shyam Lal Saraf, Sardar Budh Singh, Mr. Janki Nath Zutshi, Mr. D. P. Dhar and Comrade Sant Singh were the only non-Muslims to have been arrested. It were only Mr. Saraf, Sant Singh and D.P. Dhar who actively participated in the Movement; others were rounded off merely as a precautionary measure. Explaining the sitution in a press note, the Kashmir Government said:—

> "Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah and many of his followers have been arrested following a series of speeches delivered by him and members of his party during the last two weeks. In these speeches, people were incited to destroy the existing Government, to repudiate allegiance to His Highness and force him to quit Kashmir. Unmentionable abuse was heaped upon the person of His Highness and the ruling family."[2]

Pandit Ram Chandra Kak revealed in a press interview that he had been making preparations "for this day" for eleven months and had even recalled some State troops from the Middle East. How did the army behave with the people may be judged from the following account given by Pandit Prem Nath Bazaz:—

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1 S.Vashisht, p. 40.
2 Freedom Struggle, p. 254, 255.

"The Dogra Military misbehaved themselves. They perpetrated excesses on both Hindus and Muslims, on Nationalists and non-Nationalists. All people passing through any street or crossing a bridge where troops were stationed had to raise their hands high and shout the slogan "Maharaja Bahadur Ki Jai". Several shops were looted on mere pretence that the owners did not sell goods to militarymen even when the soldiers offered the full prices. Many innocent persons were beaten and molested on suspicion of being agitators. When, however, these things were brought to the notice of Kak, he issued instructions to the Military Command that such objectionable practices should stop at once. Thereafter matters did improve a good deal but militarymen here and there continued to be the source of trouble till they remained posted anywhere. The slogan "Quit Kashmir" was enough to ruffle the martial spirit of the Dogra soldier."[1]

Given below is a despatch from the news agency Globe published in the Indian and international press:—

"The signal was given and swarms of Gurkha and Dogra troops occupied every strategic point in and around Srinagar and literally threw a steel ring around it. With clock work precision a country-wide man-hunt immediately began and within a few hours hundreds of people were arrested and taken in military transports to the Badami Bagh Cantonment for military custody. Gurkhas were given rifles and plenty of ammunition. Dogras were detailed to search houses and effect arrests and Kashmiri policemen were asked to patrol the streets with lathis in their hands.

An operational headquarters was set up to combine and co-ordinate the police and military forces and operations throughout the State were directed through this Operational Headquarters. Lorries were protected with thick wire gauze and heavy metal bumpers; soldiers were given steel helmets and officers and Magistrates carried revolvers. Dozens of motor cycle despatch riders stood by, day and night, at the Operational Headquarters. Telephone communications were paralysed. Mobile contingents armed to the teeth patrolled day and night combing every nook and corner of both the Srinagar city and countryside. That was on Monday and Tuesday.

By Wednesday about three hundred people were arrested and more than 20 were killed, besides hundreds injured. The instructions

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1 Freedom Struggle, p. 254, 255.



اے رفیقو ! سورماؤ ! سنتے جاؤ ایک بات
ہم بھی زندہ تھے کبھی ہم بھی کبھی تھے ذی حیات

to the military were to avoid fire if possible but if necessary then shoot.

Yet the press notes reported only one killed on Tuesday and later on took up the figure to six. Press correspondents who filed detailed news messages later came to grief when they realised that the press telegrams were detained arbitrarily for 24 hours and even more, censored, mutilated and finally signalled to the destinations when they had lost all their news value. A correspondent's copy said that six people were killed but the State censor "corrected" the figure to one.

On Wednesday and Thursday the military took up positions at all important road junctions and on all bridges and ordered all passers-by to walk in lines, one by one, with hands up shouting "Maharaj Bahadur Ki Jai". Those that hesitated or resented were beaten with rifle butts and often pricked on their backs with bayonet ends. Later, people were ordered to walk with one leg limping like lame men and shouting "Maharaj Bahadur Ki Jai". Some were forced even to walk on their knees. Old men and respectable citizens were forced to crawl on the roads at the point of rifle. Shops were looted and fruit and cigarette vendors robbed. Terror reigned throughout the city for full 48 hours and all shops were closed and people kept indoors due to fear. Lawyers, professors and even Government servants were forced to fill up trenches and sweep the roads. Colleges were deserted as students, boys and girls dared not stir out of their homes.

A certain old shopkeeper who refused to give free cigarettes was dragged out of the shop by Gurkhas and made to lie flat on the ground and beaten with rifle butts till he became unconscious. He died next day."[1]

A part of the Civil Secretariat, Shergarhi was damaged by a mysterious fire on the night falling between the 28th and 29th of June. The Prime Minister, I. G. P. and the Governor rushed to the spot. A Head constable and five constables on duty on the night of incident were suspended. It was widely believed that the fire had been caused by National Conference workers. Curfew hours were relaxed in certain parts of Srinagar as late as July. It was now to remain in force from 10 p.m. to 4 a.m. in Shah Mohalla Zaldigar, Syed Hamidpurra, Mohalla Shergarhi, Mohalla Charan Garhi, Qazi Masjid, Sona Masjid, Khanwari, Haji Ratharasum, Kachrigarh Masjid, Qalamdanpura, Urdu Bazar, Islam Yarbal, Sabalkucha, Dalal Mohalla, Ashai Kucha, Ahrwat, Makhdoom Kucha, Fateh Kadal, Namchabal, Killash-

1. Kashmir on Trial, p. 10.

pura, Shamaswari and Naib Kadal. On 3rd July, one Rajab Gujri, a worker of the National Conference was arrested under Rule 50 of the Defence of Kashmir Rules on the charge that *his wife had addressed an unlawful public meeting at Hazratbal on Friday*. Even before this incident, he had been sentenced to fine on a similar charge.[1] Muslim women not only took out processions in defiance of prohibitory orders but also participated in large numbers in the public meetings at Khánqah-i-Mualla and Hazratbal. Prominent among the women workers was one Mst. Zooni. According to Martand, the special C.I.D. arrested four workers of the National Conference in Pulwama towards the close of January 1947 on the charge of having plotted to burn the important bridge at Roomshi.

On 19th September, 1946, the Maharaja went from Gupkar palace to Shergarhi in a procession to celebrate his birth-day. It was preceded, followed and flanked by hundreds of soldiers and constables armed to the teeth. The few on-lookers who turned up on the occasion, mostly Hindus or visitors, were kept beyond the firing range. The same month, the Maharaja, through a proclamation granted one month's pay as gratuity to all those officers and ranks of the army and members of the civil administration including the Magistrates who had been on duty during the Quit Kashmir Movement. Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan and Mr. Asaf Ali visited Srinagar towards the end of June. A deputation of leading Hindus led by Seth Ghansham Das Birla met Sardar Patel in Delhi towards the end of July urging upon him to restrain Pandit Nehru from interfering in the affairs of Kashmir State and also requesting him not to allow any discussion with the Cabinet Mission on the sale-deed of Kashmir. Sardar Patel told them that it was not the Congress policy to interfere in the internal affairs of the States. Pandit Shiv Narain Fotedar and Mr. Teng of Martand journeyed to Delhi twice and met Gandhiji, Patel and other Hindu leaders in connection with the Movement. Prime Minister Kak left for Delhi by air on 4th July and met Sardar Patel in Bombay. He also met Gandhiji and Maulana Azad in connection with Pandit Nehru's attitude towards the Quit Kashmir Movement. The Congress leaders told him that they were against Nehru's interference in the State affairs. The Political Adviser to the Viceroy, Sir Conard Cornfield flew in to Srinagar and had a meeting with Maharaja Hari Singh. What the Maharaja himself thought of the Movement may be judged from the following letter written by him to an English friend in Rangoon, a certain Mr. Victor. The letter somehow fell into the hands of the "Blitz" Bombay and was published by the paper. A photostat copy of the letter has been published on page 7 of the book, Kashmir on Trial:

1. Hamdard, 6th July, 1946.

"My dear Victor,

You have, no doubt, read in the papers about the trouble in Kashmir but it is not a thousandth part of what interested parties make it appear to be in the Press. The trouble started with the local demagogue, Abdullah, who is frankly communist and anti-State; suddenly discovering that he could not with impunity carry out his policy of disrupting the Government from within through the agency of his friend who had been appointed Minister, while simultaneously battering the Government from outside by making inflammatory speeches and levelling baseless accusations. Naturally my Government had to take action and took it, with the result that Abdullah and a number of his little friends were arrested. At the time of his arrest Abdullah was apparently on his way to see his Guru Jawaharlal and so Jawaharlal's personal vanity was greatly injured by the fact that his lieutenant was arrested when on his way to take sanctuary with him. Being what he is, Jawaharlal has completely gone off the deep end.

Except for a day or two after Abdullah's arrest life here has been normal and everybody goes about his business. In one quarter of the town between the 3rd and 4th bridges a Mosque has been converted into a political stage and two or three thousand people including women collect there daily ostensibly for prayers but in reality to keep the show of agitation alive by making inflammatory speeches and using objectionable slogans. We are keeping our end up well and no one interested in us need feel any anxiety. The movement was, of course, very dangerous but we have weathered the storm. In fact, our main headache now is hostile and baseless criticism from Jawaharlal, but even his renting must have a limit. In any case we are prepared for anything he may say or do—and we think he knows it—in fact in the end he may feel that discretion is the better part of valour and shut up; anyway we will fight and fight to an end. This is a test case for all the States.

I am posting this letter to your Rangoon address and should it reach you, do let me know how long you propose to be in Burma.

We are expecting Tiger for his summer vacations on the 18th.

With kindest regards from us all.

Yours sincerely,
Sd. Hari Singh."

Srinagar,
1st June, 1946.

FAR-SIGHTED NEHRU COURTS' ARREST

The attitude of Congress leadership in contrast to that adopted by Pandit Nehru looks to some observers as irreconcilable but it was not so. The Congress and its powerful press lost no time in condemning the Movement and supporting the Dogra Government. It was not unnatural, partly because the ruling family professed Hindu faith but largly because the Congress leadership realised that the Ruler was going to be a key figure in the ultimate political affiliation of the State;besides, by supporting the Quit Kashmir Movement, it would have destroyed the position of trust and confidence that it had over the years, so laboriously, built up with the great number of Princes. That explains why leading Congress papers, Hindustan Times, Amrit Bazar Patrika, Times of India, Hindu, Free Press Journal and Tribune, not only played down the Movement but editorially condemned it as reckless and ill-conceived. According to Mr. Vashisht:

> "The Congress leaders were also amazed at the slogan of Sheikh Abdullah against the Maharaja. They lost no time in condemning the movement and brought fullest pressure on the Nationalists to disown it. Acharya Kripalani, the then Congress President, disapproved the move. He was convinced that Quit Kashmir was a mischievous move and unless it was withdrawn, there was no possibility of compromise between the National Conference and the Kashmir Government."[1]

Pandit Nehru, however, was the only Congress leader who took a different attitude and condemned the repressive policy of the Dogra Government, though at the same time, he dissociated the Congress and the All India States People's Conference, he being President-elect of the former and President of the latter, from the Movement. He, however, vehemently condemned the policy of oppression resorted to by the State Government. In a statement from Delhi on 27th May, he said: "Srinagar had become a city of dead" and that "a wall of Jamia Masjid had been demolished". The latter part of the statement was contradicted by Chaudhry Hameedullah Khan, then Vice President of the All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference. The true position is that no wall had been demolished but a military lorry had, while recklessly negotiating a wooden gate, dislodged some bricks. However, it was questionable for a leader of the Muslim Conference, of all people, to have taken upon himself the responsibility of contradicting Nehru and supporting the Government. The feeling generally was that "it was the unkindest cut of all".

1 Sheikh Abdullah, Then and Now, p.40.

Some correspondence passed between Pandit Nehru and Maharaja Hari Singh. In addition to telegrams exchanged by them which were later released to the press, Pandit Nehru also sent a letter through a personal messenger. In all his telegrams, Pandit Nehru impressed upon the State Government the absolute necessity of releasing Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah forthwith and when it was refused, he informed the Maharaja by a telegram dated 15th June that he was reaching Srinagar on the 19th alongwith a number of lawyers who were to defend Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah. He again called upon the Maharaja to withdraw prosecution against the imprisoned leader. When the shrewd Pandit decided to visit Srinagar to study the situation for himself, the Kashmir Government banned his entry. This naturally infuriated him and it must be said to his credit that he was not the type of a man who could take such a ban lightly or be expected to comply with it. Thereupon, he left Delhi on 16th June, momentarily abandoning crucial negotiations which he was conducting with the Cabinet Mission. Accompanied by three eminent lawyers, Dewan Chaman Lal, Mr. Asaf Ali and Mr. Baldev Sahai, ex-Advocate-General, Bihar, he started from Rawalpindi on 20th June, followed by about three hundred Congress workers who joined him partly at Rawalpindi but largely at the health resort Murree. In addition to having posted a sizable contingent of soldiers at Kohala, to prevent his ingress, the Government had also spent large sums to stage an anti-Nehru demonstration by interested quarters. A Jatha of Dogras led by Thakar Haqiqat Singh, a retired Conservator of forests, had come all the way from Jammu. Groups of Kashmiri Pandits were sent from Srinagar; the District administration in Muzaffarabad had been directed to reinforce them with the local loyalist elements. This writer was then General Secretary of the Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference. The Party had officially decided on a policy of non-intervention but let it be disclosed as a duty towards History, that family confidents of Mir Waiz Mohammad Yusuf Shah, such as Maulvi Mohammad Amin, Maulvi Noor-ud-Din and close lieutenants like Khawaja Abdus Salam Dalal, also sent a group of their followers to Kohala to participate in the demonstration. I had only a few days back returned to Baramula and was awakened at mid-night. I was surprised to find a batch of dedicated followers of Mir Waiz led by Mr. Sattar Gujri, a gallant worker of the Srinagar branch but all the same, a fanatic follower of Mir Waiz. They were obviously not aware that they had been sent to Kohala in violation of the Party policy. This writer was told that they had been sent by the Party at Srinagar which, of course, meant the Mir Waiz Party, to participate in a demonstration that was being staged against Pandit Nehru's entry into the State. One learnt distressingly that the astute Brahmin, the Kashmiri-speaking Kak, *had* established some sort of an understanding with Mir Waiz Mohammad Yusuf Shah.

Pandit Nehru was stopped in the midst of the Kohala bridge by Dogra troops with fixed bayonets but he refused to be cowed down. Preceding him was one Pandit Dwarka Nath Kachru who was taken into custody immediately. Pandit Nehru was, however, not arrested at the bridge but permitted to make a forced entry. He walked for a short distance, before entering his car which sped towards Srinagar but twenty-two miles away at the Domel Custom post, he was stopped and the District Magistrate, Pandit Maharaj Kishan Dhar, served upon him a warrant of arrest. He was lodged at the Domel Dak bungalow for a few hours and then taken to the Rest House at Uri where he spent two nights. A State car was placed at his disposal; he was told that he was free to return to British India at any time at his will but he insisted upon visiting Srinagar. Telephone facilities were then made available which enabled him to talk to Maulana Abul Kalam Azad who advised him to return to Delhi on the understanding that the Working Committee had taken the matter into its own hands. He was also told that his absence from Delhi was hampering negotiations for the transfer of power. At the request of Maulana Azad, Lord Wavell sent a plane to Srinagar which brought him and Asaf Ali to Delhi at 2 a.m. on 22nd June 1946.[1] Meanwhile, when news of his arrest was published in the press, demonstrations were held in several parts of India. In Madura, the demonstrators became violent and the police had to open fire resulting in the death of one and injuries to several others. To satisfy Nehru's personal vanity which had been piqued by his detention, the Congress Working Committee prevailed upon the State Government to lift the ban and allow him to visit Srinagar. This was done and Nehru reached Srinagar on 24th July. He had a long meeting with Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah in the Badami Bagh Cantonment and made a call at his house and spent some time with Begum Abdullah. He drove to Chashma Shahi where Maharaja's Raj Guru was staying. Pandit Nehru remained closetted with him for hours. It is not known what transpired between them but the general belief was that he tried to use the good offices of the Guru partly to assure Hari Singh that the Quit Kashmir Movement did not have his support and partly to bring about an understanding between the Despot and the imprisoned leader. There was, however, no doubt that the mission did not succeed. He returned within a few days, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah entrusting him with the arrangements for his defence.

It has been sometimes said that the Quit Kashmir Movement had been launched on the advice and at the inspiration of Congress but the only evidence cited in support of this supposition is Pandit Nehru's personal role therein. It is easily forgotten that Congress openly condemned it

1. India Wins Freedom, p. 174.

through its powerful press and not a single Congressman of note except Pandit Nehru uttered a word of sympathy even for the wanton killings and repression in the Valley. Why Pandit Nehru supported it to the limited extent of condemning Government repression was only to express political solidarity with Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah for political reasons. Nehru was *the man* who was conducting, more than anybody else, negotiations with the British Government for the transfer of power and he may be credited with the knowledge, more than any other Congress leader, of the picture that the future had in store. He realised the importance of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah as a popular leader in a geographically vital Muslim majority area and was wise enough to realise that it was in the interests of Congress that he should be on its side. It was for this and only this reason that Nehru cast himself in the role of a friend and supporter of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah.

He sent Mr. Asaf Ali, a brilliant barrister and a member of the Congress Working Committee to defend Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah who was tried by Mr. Barkat Rai, Sessions Judge, under section 124-A (treason) Penal Code. Pandit Jia Lal Killam volunteered to assist the defence. The Kashmir Government engaged a Lahore lawyer Mr. Sethi to lead the team of prosecution lawyers. He was retained for some time only after which the case was conducted by Pandit Madsudan Kak, Assistant Advocate General. Mr. Sethi was paid Rs. 1,650 per day. The Government incurred an expenditure of rupees fifty thousand on his fee alone. The trial lasted nearly three weeks. In his statement before the Court, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah said:—

> "Oppressed by extreme poverty and lack of freedom and opportunity for the people of Jammu and Kashmir State, I and my colleagues of the Jammu and Kashmir National Conference, many of whom are behind prison bars or in exile today, have humbly sought to serve them during the past sixteen years. We have endeavoured to give faithful expression to the growing consciousness among the people of their imprescriptible rights, aspirations and desire for freedom. This has attracted the penal and preventive provisions of law. Where law is not based on the will of the people, it can lend itself to the suppression of their aspirations. Such law has no moral validity even though it may be enforced for a while. There is a law higher than that, the law that represents the people's will and secures their well-being, and there is the tribunal of human conscience, which judges the rulers and the ruled alike by standards which do not change by the arbitrary will of the most powerful. To that law I gladly submit and that tribunal I shall face with confidence and without fear, leaving it to history and posterity to pronounce their verdict, on the claims

I and my colleagues have made not merely on behalf of the four million people of Jammu and Kashmir but also of the ninety-three million people of all the States of India. That claim has not been confined to the people of a particular race, or religion or colour. It applies to all, for I hold that humanity as a whole is indivisible by such barriers and human rights must always prevail. The fundamental rights of all men and women to live and act as free beings, to make laws and fashion their political, social and economic fabric, so that they may advance the cause of human freedom and progress, are inherent and cannot be denied though they may be suppressed for a while. I hold that sovereignty resides in the people, all relationships, political, social and economic, derive authority from the collective will of the people."[1]......

"It is a small matter whether I am imprisoned and tried and convicted. But it is no small matter that the people of Jammu and Kashmir suffer poverty, humiliation and degradation. It has been no small matter what they have endured during the violent repression and horror of the past two months and more, and what they are enduring now. These very events have demonstrated the justice of our demand and of our cry "Quit Kashmir". For a system of government that can subsist only by pursuing such methods, stands condemned. If my imprisonment and that of my colleagues serves the cause to which we have dedicated ourselves, then it will be well with us and we shall take pride in thus serving our people and the land of our forefathers.

Kashmir is dear to us because of its beauty and its past traditions which are common to all who inhabit this land. But it is the future that calls to us and for which we labour, a future that will be the common heritage of all, and in which we as free men and women, linked organically with the rest of India, will build the New Kashmir of our dreams. Then only shall we be worthy of the land we dwell in."[2]

Mr. Asaf Ali made a spirited defence and delivered a really brilliant address. On 10th September 1946, to a packed Court room with hundreds of Muslims waiting outside, the Sessions Judge pronounced judgment and sentenced him to nine years simple imprisonment and a fine of rupees five hundred. As he had been sentenced under three counts to three years imprisonment each and the sentences were to run concurrently, it meant a sentence of three years. Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah did not exercise his right of appeal to the High Court.

1&2. Kashmir on Trial, p. 25 & 28.

CHAPTER INDEX

CHAPTER XVIII

Muslim Conference Leaders' Dilemma

The Movement had a strange reaction outside the State. While inside the State, it was condemned by the Muslim Conference as Congress-inspired, in order to justify its aloofness, in British India it was condemned by the Congress but unreservedly supported by the Muslim press. The powerful Muslim press at Lahore extended its full support because it considered the Movement as being essentially for the benefit of Muslims. Lamenting this support, Chaudhri Ghulam Abbas says in his autobiography:—

> "(After meeting the Quaid-e-Azam in Delhi) I came to Lahore in the company of Mr. Saghar and first of all had a meeting with Hazrat Maulana Zafar Ali Khan whose deep interest in the politics of Kashmir from the very beginning of the Movement (1931) was well known. Maulana Akhtar Ali Khan was also present. We tried to make them understand the different aspects of the Movement launched by Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah but since Mr. Akhtar particularly has been sentimental with regard to Kashmir, he did not for some time lend his ears but after considerable arguments was a bit satisfied. This is also what happened when we called on Mr. Maikash (Murtaza Ahmad Khan Maikash, Editor daily Ehsan). Last of all we went to Mr. Hameed Nizami. We found him far harder than others in the matter. Besides being a man of cool disposition, he was also a close friend of mine. During our discussions, when I referred him to the recent statement of the Quaid-e-Azam (issued a few days earlier from Delhi after Chaudhri Ghulam Abbas had a meeting with him), Mr. Hameed Nizami immediately silenced me by saying that the Quaid-e-Azam had issued this statement at my instance. I had no answer to it but I did tell him

that our opinion for the Quaid-e-Azam was very high. The daily "Inquilab" of Mehr (Maulana Ghulam Rasool Mehr) and Salik (Maulana Abdul Majeed Salik), always leaned towards us but at this time the attitude of both had undergone a change."[1]

"Mr. Ghulam Mohi-ud-Din Kara, President, District National Conference, performed commendable and really unparalleled role and put life into the movement. At the same time, some top workers of the National Conference succeeded in secretly leaving the State under the leadership of Bakhshi Ghulam Muhammad. They established themselves at Lahore and succeeded in winning over the Muslim League press and some leading Muslim leaders. Despite the appeal that the slogan of Quit Kashmir had, the position of Muslim Conference remained unaffected but the difficulty was that the Muslim press in Punjab openly supported the movement. "Zamindar" wrote several editorials calling the Muslim Conference a reactionary organisation. Nawa-e-Waqt, Inquilab and Ehsan also wrote a lot about it. The underground organisation of the Movement was so regular that the comments of the Muslim press were daily distributed in Srinagar openly in the shape of pamphlets and posters. This position caused us a lot of worry."[2]

Bakhshi Ghulam Muhammad conducted an incessant campaign from Lahore, Delhi and Bombay. Of course, he and his colleagues at Lahore released exaggerated versions of the incidents taking place in Kashmir but that is the universal practice with political movements in the East. The Hero of the movement, however, unquestionably, was Khawaja Ghulam Mohi-ud-Din Kara who remained underground till after the release of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah in October, 1947. The Government strained every nerve and spent large sums of money to get him arrested but in vain. A special wing was created in the State Gestapo to locate his whereabouts but he successfully thwarted efforts aimed at his discovery. He did not hide just to prevent his imprisonment but sustained the Movement in Srinagar. There was hardly a day during the first few months and hardly a week later on, when someone did not offer himself for arrest after addressing a congregation at Khanqah-e-Mualla or the Shrine at Hazrat Bal. The appearance of 'seditious' leaflets and posters continued as a regular feature. Hundreds of houses and almost every hotel was searched to trace him. As a result of his brilliant role, he became a legendary hero.

Hundreds of political workers arrested in the Valley were removed first to Jammu jail and then, some of them to Ramnagar fort which had

1&2. Autobiography, p. 319 & 309.

been under repairs for six months. Two died in Jammu jail. The Government claimed that they died of sun strokes but it was alleged by political circles that they had been beaten to death. Despite public demands, no inquiry into the causes of their death was held which shows that, after all, the allegations of torture may not have been ill-founded. Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah was later removed to the notorious snake-infested Reasi jail. Mir Waiz Hamdani had also been arrested and despite his old age and serious illness, was transferred to Muzaffarabad jail. At a public meeting held in Pallandari under the presidentship of retired Lt. Jalal Khan, apart from demanding the withdrawal of the punitive Police Choki from the town, the speakers also expressed sympathy with the victims of Government repression in Kashmir valley.

Towards the beginning of 1947, the National Conference launched a movement against excesses committed by the Jagirdar and the army in Chinhani which was held by a family related to Gulab Singh. Poverty in the area was proverbial and the system of administration was in certain respects worse than that of the Middle ages. Some workers were arrested but nothing happened so far as the demand for reforms was concerned. However, the Dogra Government did take some steps to ease the food situation. By about the same time, February, 1947, the cost of living again registered an alarming rise, particularly in Srinagar. The National Conference set up a Food Committee with Begum Abdullah as Chairwoman. She started a mass campaign against the rising cost of living.

Public pressure began mounting on the Muslim Conference High Command to either join the Movement or support its objectives. Perhaps, left to himself, Chaudhri Ghulam Abbas Khan would have preferred to go to jail, preferably alone, but the fear of unpleasant reaction on the part of the Quaid-e-Azam prevented him from adopting such a course of action. The support being extended to the Movement by the Muslim press at Lahore which had a large circulation in the State and helped shape and unshape Muslim public opinion, also unnerved the Muslim Conference circles. That the pro-Pakistan press in Punjab should have been describing Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah as a Hero, negatived the stand taken by the Party that the Movement was Congress-inspired; it aslo affected the standing of the Party in public estimation.

I am sorry now for a slight digression as it is necessary in the interests of the narrative. A few days after the Sopore session of the National Conference, this writer resigned from the National Conference and the All India Students Congress; he was a member of the Working Committee since December, 1944, and Secretary, incharge of Princely States, both of

the latter. Those were the days when defections by Muslims from Congress and pro-Congress Muslim parties were taking place almost daily all over the sub-continent. The resignation was wel-comed by the daily "Hamdard" in a full half-page editorial captioned "Kashmir main bhi Bismillah ho gayee". The reasons for the change not being important for this narrative, are not being detailed.

THE MUSLIM CONFERENCE

The position at the time was that as a mass organisation, the Muslim Conference had no existence in the Valley. No public meeting could be held anywhere except in the small locality beyond Zaina-Kadal, Srinagar, inhabited by personal followers of Mir Waiz Muhammad Yusuf Shah. After this writer joined the Party, it started a mass-contact campaign in Baramula and its neighbourhood; it was a sad experience because invariably the local National Conference workers resorted to goondaism and harassment. However, the Party was able to set up, for the first time since its revival, a public platform in the town. I also discovered that the overwhelming majority of those who styled themselves as leaders of the Party anywhere in the Valley, were drawing-room politicians who had neither the guts nor the capacity for grass-root political work. The real and politically tried leadership was confined to Jammu city, who unfortunately thought it enough to leave the party organisation in the Valley to the motionless hands of Mir Waiz Muhammad Yusuf Shah and limited their personal contact and what is more important, confidence, to him. The picture was thus very dismal for a worker who had come from the thick of political arena.

It was in this background that this writer received a special invitation from Mir Waiz Sahib to attend the Working Committee meeting at Srinagar. Qureshi Muhammad Yusuf, the Party General Secretary, was all out for the Party's participation in the Quit Kashmir Movement and since the Party High Command had rejected this line of action, he resigned from the Party Secretaryship and later courted arrest. The resignation was not accepted but this writer was appointed Acting General Secretary of the Party.

The Working Committee met on the 9th and 10th of June, 1946, under the presidentship of Mir Waiz Muhammad Yusuf Shah. If I correctly remember now, those who attended from Jammu were Chaudhry Ghulam Abbas Khan, Mr. A.R. Saghar, Chaudhry Hameedullah Khan, Chaudhry Muhammad Abdullah Khan Bhalli, Hakim Muhammad Hussain, Professor Muhammad Ishaque Qureshi, Sardar Abdur Rahim Durrani and Col. Pir Muhammad Khan. Among those who attended from Kashmir valley whom

I can recollect were, apart from Mir Waiz Sahib, Maulvi Muhammad Amin, Maulvi Noor-ud-Din, Khawaja Abdus Salam Dalal, Mr. Muhammad Ismail Saghar, Khawaja Ghulam Mohi-ud-Din Rahbar, Khawaja Ghulam Muhammad Jeweller and Mir Waiz Maulvi Muhammad Abdullah of Shopian.

Frankly, there existed no enthusiasm at all for participation in the Quit Kashmir Movement or the launching of any anti-Government agitation. At the very out-set, Chaudhri Ghulam Abbas Khan informed the meeting that the Quaid-e-Azam was strongly against participation. The Working Committee, therefore, passed the following resolution:—

> "The Working Committee of the Muslim Conference has considered the Quit Kashmir Demand put forth by President of the National Conference. Irrespective of the validity or invalidity of the demand for the Treaty's cancellation in the light of legal and constitutional opinion, as the slogan of the National Conference President has been opposed by Pandit Nehru, President-elect of the Congress, and in this connection the policy enunciated by Pandit Nehru with regard to the Indian States and again the statement recently released through the Globe News Agency at Delhi by Acting President of the National Conference after several meetings with Pandit Nehru and then again the fact that Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah President of the National Conference has in a letter from jail entrusted his defence to Pandit Nehru show that the National Conference has totally abandoned the Quit Kashmir slogan (?) which does not even enjoy official recognition by the said Party and the Movement has been handed over totally into the hands of Congress leaders (?) and even the movers of this slogan are themselves wavering and their policy in this regard is neither final nor definite (?) and they are adopting new interpretations, being given to the Quit Kashmir slogan by Hindu Congress leaders; therefore, it is premature for the Muslim Conference to express any opinion on the matter."[1]

It looks ironical that while the National Conference was demanding that the Dogra rulers quit the State, the Muslim Conference was obsessed with demands about cow-killing, Devanagri script, Services etc. as will be evident from the following resolution passed by the Working Committee:

> "The Muslims of Jammu and Kashmir had from the very beginning grave complaints against the Government for the redress of which they have continuously struggled and suffered but unfortunately the Government did not redress the same. But on the other hand its attitude has gradually worsened. It is such a hard fact which has been admitted even by some non-Muslim Premiers of the State. What can be the greater proof of depriving Muslims of their rights than the fact

1. Autobiography, p. 310.

that although the Dogra raj is now a hundred year old, none of the twentyeight persons who held the office of Prime Ministership during this period was a Muslim. The Muslims, despite this ill-treatment continued to remain loyal to the Government and in the hope of a better tomorrow they have been undergoing hardships; but now that their patience has exceeded its limits, the Working Committee resolves that if the Government did not, even now, change its anti-Muslim policy pursued since a century, the Muslims would be compelled to adopt all possible measures within their power to compel a change. The Working Committee demands that the following grievances be redressed at an early date:—

1. Sentence of ten years for cow-killing be cancelled.
2. The law providing for forfeiture of property on conversion to Islam be cancelled.
3. The Arms Act be so amended as to either confer the same concessions on all sections of citizens as are enjoyed by the Rajputs or else the restrictions imposed by the Act should be universally enforced.
4. Orders for the forced teaching of Hindi be withdrawn.
5. Muslims be given representation in Services on the basis of their population and their dearth in important posts which is very glaring should be remedied. The State army which consists of nine infantry and one cavalry regiments contains only one and a half Muslim Infantry regiments. Muslims should be recruited in the army according to the ratio of their population. Kashmiri Muslims also, be declared entitled to recruitment in the army.
6. The civil liberties of Muslims have been paralysed. The Working Committee demands that the merciless use of Defence Rules and the repressive restrictions placed on the Muslim press be immediately withdrawn.

The Working Committee resolves that if the Kashmir Government did not fulfil the least demands of Muslims as put forth above, the Muslim Conference will be compelled to launch a Direct Action. The Working Committee, therefore, authorises the Committee of Action to prepare a Direct Action programme if the demands are not met and calls upon the people to act on the same. This meeting also appeals to Muslim masses to prepare themselves in right earnest for any sacrifice."

After the session, Chaudhri Ghulam Abbas, accompanied by Mr. Saghar, left for Delhi and had a meeting with the Quaid-e-Azam.

City Muslim Conference Srinagar commanded a group of dedicated workers led by Khawaja Abdus Salam Dalal. A dare-devil, Dalal was undoubtedly the most outstanding of them all and also the most outspoken critic of National Conference. Another leading worker was Comrade Mir Abdul Aziz, B.A. (Hons), who edited the local Party weeklies "Millat" and "Jauhar". An indefatigable worker, he has infinite capacity for sustained political work, but as unfortunately happens with political workers not coming from rich families, he not only did not get encouragement but his advance was blocked by reactionary leadership. Then there were other fine workers like Khawaja Ghulam Mohi-ud-Din Tranbu, Pir Tayyab Shah, Mr. Mohammad Amin Haider and Mr. Abdus Sattar Gujri. Among the Party brains in the city, who framed and directed the policy on behalf of Mir Waiz, were Maulvi Mohammad Noor-ud-Din and Maulvi Mohammad Amin. Maulvi Mohammad Amin was a whole-timer and was the official link between Mir Waiz and the Party. Maulvi Noor-ud-Din, however, was more intelligent. As earlier stated, the Party existed only in name except in Srinagar and Baramula. I paid a visit to Bijbihara about which I was told at Srinagar that we had an active branch but was sorry to learn by experience that the local party workers were not strong enough to hold a public meeting. The position, however, was very encouraging in Shopian where Mir Waiz Mohammad Abdullah, the hereditary Mufti and religious divine had sometime back parted company with Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah and joined the Muslim Conference. He had a very large following and was almost the uncrowned King of the area. He constructed a beautiful Jamia Masjid in the town on the pattern of Jamia Masjid, Srinagar. It is an imposing structure and the best mosque in the State after Jamia Masjid and Pathar Masjid, Srinagar.

During my stay in Srinagar, I had the opportunity of watching the personal influence of Mir Waiz Mohammad Yusuf Shah. Mention may be made of two instances only. I accompanied him twice or thrice at dinner parties given by the choicest elders among his followers. In the Valley, the customary and generally the universally followed practice of serving a dinner or lunch is that cooked rice of the quantity of not less than one and a half seer is placed in a big copper plate with a circumference of about two feet; four persons sit around it, each pair facing each other, and they eat at four different points. The coarses are served by the head cook who takes a round from one end to the other carrying a pot and a big bowl. I noticed that the trami, as the copper plate is called, placed before Mir Waiz Sahib was not permitted to be shared by any one else. When I enquired privately from the host as to why

it was so, I was told that the practice was to distribute the remainder of the food in the trami among inmates of the house and other relatives of the host as a benediction. The second instance happened towards the close of July. A Convention of the Muslim Conference workers was to be held at Srinagar. The office was without funds and I spoke to Mir Waiz Sahib about it who directed me to send some workers to Jamia Masjid on Friday to remind him of the same. In response to his appeal at the Jumma congregation, I think our workers were able to raise, immediately, about a thousand rupees.

The annual session of the Party was proposed to be held at Muzaffarabad. A Reception Committee with Sardar Abdur Rahim Durrani as Chairman had been already set up but the Government imposed section 144, Criminal Procedure Code, for two months, thus prohibiting the taking out of processions or the holding of public meetings. The reader may well judge for himself the naked discrimination practised by the Government which had, about a year back, not only permitted the Hindu Rajya Sabha to hold a highly provocative session in the same town but whose outside invitees, Doctors, Moonje and Dev, travelled in the local S.D.M's car from the border post at Kohala. It was therefore hurriedly decided to postpone the session and hold a workers Convention at Srinagar on the same dates.

Durrani who, in later years, became deaf was the son of an S.D.M. and a very sincere worker of the liberation movement. He was a practising lawyer but shifted from place to place on the advice of Chaudhri Ghulam Abbas Khan in the interests of the political movement. Like many other workers, nobody took notice of him after the setting up of the Azad Kashmir Government except during the brief period in 1952 when Mir Waiz and his advisers were in power for a few months.

The Working Committee again met in Srinagar on 26th July and passed what has come to be known as the Azad Kashmir resolution. A Convention of party workers attended by about two hundred, was held on 27th and 28th July at Mir Waiz Manzil under the presidentship of Chaudhri Ghulam Abbas Khan who had earlier been elected President for the ensuing year. Each district committee had a single vote. From 1932 right upto 1947, the election of the President, whether of the Muslim Conference or that of the National Conference, had been unanimous. It was so because it was the Party High Command or rather a few of them who decided as to who was to head the Party for the next year. Accordingly, the name was proposed through one of the district branches and supported by others. However, after the revival of the Party right upto partition, it shuttled between Chaudhri Ghulam Abbas Khan and Mir Waiz Sahib. None else, not even A. R. Saghar, was ever considered.

Mention has already been made of some understanding between Kak and the Mir Waiz group as evidenced by participation of the latter's followers in the anti-Nehru demonstration at Kohala. It is likely that Maulvi Mohammad Amin or Maulvi Mohammad Noor-ud-Din were primarily responsible for the understanding. I learnt once that Mir Waiz Sahib had gone to meet the Prime Minister. It was not reported in the press. Pandit Kak was opposed to any popular platform and as such he hated the Muslim Conference at least as much as he did the National Conference. The only difference was that the National Conference being decidedly stronger and better organised of the two, received priority in the execution of his anti-people programme. I have already stated that he had political ambitions and wanted to bring into being a party of his own which was to be loyalist to the core, at least in its early stages, but with the principal object of advancing his own ambitions. Whether a political understanding was or was not reached between them and whether their common hatred of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah had brought them together for the limited purpose of opposing him, is not known and I wouldn't hazard a guess. That would be unfair to every one; but one thing is definitely clear: that the advisers of Mir Waiz did not want introduction of any tension between the Muslim Conference and Pandit Kak. This would be clear from the following incident: Having never been a personal follower of Mir Waiz Sahib and having been trained in a hard school of politics, these advisers of Mir Waiz Sahib wanted to ensure that the annual report by this writer did not contain any anti-Kak reference; so one day Maulvi Mohammad Amin asked me to take him through the said report and when this was done, he instantly took objection to about two pages which dealt with Kak's anti-Muslim policies and in which I had not only condemned him but also lamented his political bankruptcy in seeking to suppress both the Conferences, the only political parties of consequence. I was asked to delete these pages. Well aware that arrangements for the Convention depended entirely on their good-will, I apparently agreed to drop the passage. However, when in the Convention I read the report, I also read these pages. Fortunately, everyone who followed, condemned the policy of the Kak Government and foremost among them naturally were Chaudhri Ghulam Abbas Khan and Mr. A.R. Saghar.

The address of welcome was read by Khawaja Abdus Salam Dalal in his capacity as Chairman of the Reception Committee. In his presidential address, Chaudhri Ghulam Abbas Khan said:

> "So long as India does not attain freedom and Englishmen do not leave it, it is useless to talk of the cancellation of treaties. *Quit Kashmir slogan should have been raised against the English because legally*

the greater responsibility falls on the shoulders of the vendors; the vendors were the English; the vendors should be held guilty before (holding) guilty the vendee; the entire responsibility of this great sin falls on the shoulders of the English vendors.

Muslim Conference High Command made an offer in Jammu to respectable members of the National Conference High Command that if they give up 'nationalism' and unconditionally joined the Muslim Conference, the Muslim Conference leaders were prepared to work as ordinary volunteers for the implementation of any programme that such leaders of the National Conference may draw up..... Had we been the initiators of the Quit Kashmir Movement, we would have been at this time in jails while the National Conference friends would have joined hands with Kak and his Government. If Sheikh Sahib is released from jail at any time in the near future, you will remember me when I say that it will happen only after he has in unequivocal terms withdrawn the Quit Kashmir slogan, in writing and placed this undertaking in the hands of Maharaja Hari Singh, and if this is going to happen, who then would be responsible for the innocent killing of Muslims? It is for you to understand it".[1]

The Convention ratified the following resolution known as "The Azad Kashmir Resolution" which had been earlier passed by the Working Committee in its June session :—

"Whereas a new Constitution is about to be framed for India and a Constituent Assembly is being brought into being to bring about a Union with restricted powers of British India and the Indian States, the Cabinet Mission proposals for providing representation to ten crore inhabitants of Princely States are very vague and the State people have fears that they will be left to the mercy of their autocratic Princes. The Working Committee is of the opinion that the inhabitants of Indian States should be given the right to elect their representatives for the Constituent Assembly in the same manner as has been the case with British India; especially with regard to Jammu and Kashmir State, the Working Committee demands that the representatives that may represent the State in the Constituent Assembly in the Centre, should be elected by members of the Kashmir Assembly and their ratio and mode of election should be the same as has been made imperative in British India.

The Working Committee also demands that in the near future when it is intended for the Indian States to join the Central grouping, this right should be exercised only by the inhabitants of the State.

1 Javed, 3rd August 1946.

Again, whereas personal rule and democracy cannot exist side by side and the proposed Constituent Assemby is to prepare a Constitution for different parts of India, on free democratic principles, it is, therefore essential for the Jammu and Kashmir State (which by way of population and area is bigger than N.W.F.P. and equal to Sind), that its Constitution should also be framed on the basis of the same principles. Therefore, it is necessary that the unrepresentative and autocratic Government should be immediately brought to an end and the people granted the right to frame a Constitution of their own liking by a Constituent Assembly of their own which will in the light of its special requirements frame a Constitution for Azad Kashmir as it deems fit. In order to achieve this purpose, it is necessary to bring into being immediately a Constituent Assembly for the Jammu and Kashmir State.

The Working Committee demands of His Highness the Maharaja of Kashmir that in order to achieve this objective, he should dissolve the existing outlived Assembly and bring into being in its place a Constituent Assembly as demanded in the Resolution which should be elected on the basis of an extended franchise and all whose members should be elected and wherein every Nation and community should enjoy representation on the basis of its population and through separate electorate. Such an Assembly should be empowered to frame a Constitution for the Jammu and Kashmir State. The Working Committee hopes that in view of the changed situation, the interests of the whole of India and for the betterment of the people of the State, His Highness the Maharaja of Kashmir will recognise the legitimate rights of the State people to determine their own future. The Working Committee would like to make it clear that if the Kashmir Government adopts some other course than the one suggested by the Working Committee, it will not be acceptable to the Muslim Conference."[1]

The Convention was addressed, among others, by Chaudhry Hameedullah Khan, Mr. Ismail Saghar, Sardar Yar Mohammad Khan, Sardar Behram Khan and Mir Waiz Mohammad Abdullah from Shopian. The main resolution was also supported by Khawaja Abdus Salam Chhapri, a leader of the local beatmen who had, a few months earlier, joined the Muslim Conference, Khawaja Ghulam Mohammad Jeweller, Khawaja Mohammad Khalil Kitchlu, M.L.A., Mr. Ghulam Din Wani, Pleader, Mr. Ghulam Mohi-ud-Din Tranbu, Khawaja Ghulam Mohi-ud-Din Sopori, Khawaja Ghulam Rasool Punjabi, Khawaja Ghulam Ahmad Trali, Pir Zia-ud-Din, M.L.A. and Qazi Abdul Ghani Delina, M.L.A. The Conference elected Agha Shaukat Ali, General Secretary, Mr. A.R. Saghar, Publicity Secretary, Sardar Yar Mohammad Khan, Joint Secretary and Khawaja Ghulam Mohammad Jeweller as Treasurer.

1 Javed, 13th June 1946.

No public meeting could be held at the close of the Convention to formally place the resolutions before the people in keeping with the decade-old practice of political parties because, apart from the dusk to dawn curfew still in force, Section 144 Cr. P.C. which forbade the gathering of more than five persons was also renewed after two months since last May. A Royal Durbar confined to Jagirdars, Zaildars, Lambardars, Government pensioners and contractors was held in Srinagar on 15th July. Except for the National Conference, a number of leaders from other political parties were also invited. MirWaiz Mohammad Yusuf Shah personally declined the invitation but a few personal followers who may be termed as second rank leaders of the Muslim Conference did participate. It was boycotted by the Kisan Mazdoor Conference. In the proclamation read out at the Durbar, the Maharaja was 'pleased' to announce that:

> "he would not tolerate any foreign intervention in the domestic affairs of the State and advised the people that they should co-operate with his Government in the maintenance of law and order."

Commenting on the attitude of the Muslim Conference High Command with regard to the Quit Kashmir Movement, Pandit Bazaz says:

> "Kashmir agitation, collectively helped the nationalists to gain some ground which they had lost during the past five years in the country. This unnerved the top ranking leaders of the Muslim Conference. Some of them consulted Jinnah. It was reported that he firmly advised that the Muslim Conference should in no way directly or indirectly lend its support to the agitation......But it required the wisdom and political foresight of Jinnah to understand the implications of the Nationalist agitation. None of those comprising the High Command of the Muslim Conference in 1946 were endowed with these rare qualities. They were dazzled by the publicity which the Congress press gave to the imprisoned Nationalists and their agitation. Soon they began to feel they were less patriotic than the Nationalists because they were outside the prison walls. Incapable of doing any constructive work in the field of politics, the leaders of the Muslim Conference remained mentally absorbed in search of a pretext to start an agitation against the Government. But it was evident that such actions, however laudable at any other time, would prove suicidal for the Muslim Conference in the circumstances in which the country was placed at the time. And Jinnah warned them against taking any such step. Yet, incredibly enough, the topmost leaders were bent upon measuring swords with the Maharaja's Government."[1]

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1. Freedom Struggle, p. 264-265.

Mr. K.H. Khurshid has confirmed that the Quaid-e-Azam had strongly advised Chaudhri Ghulam Abbas Khan against going into jail in view of the political situation in the sub-continent.[1]

CH. GHULAM ABBAS KHAN DETAINED

The Muslim Conference now decided to hold its annual session in Srinagar on 24th and 25th October, 1946. The ban on public meetings in the city imposed since the start of the Quit Kashmir Movement, was revived after every two months. The Party applied for permission to hold the session but Pandit Ram Chandra Kak was not the type of man who could be credited with adopting a reasonable attitude towards political parties. The permission, therefore, was refused. The Working Committee had a long session on 23rd October.

Two alternatives were open to the Working Committee, namely, either to obey the ban and disperse without holding the session or to defy it and launch a Civil Disobedience Movement. They did not adopt either of the two but on the other hand, Chaudhri Ghulam Abbas told members of the Working Committee that he would alone court arrest by defying the ban. Agha Shaukat Ali insisted, also to follow in his footsteps. Although Mir Waiz Sahib did not take any clear stand in the meeting, he made it known, after returning to his home, that he did not support a clash with the Government and instead would like the Party to preserve all its energies for fighting the ensuing elections which were scheduled to take place in two to three months. Therefore on 24th October, Chaudhri Ghulam Abbas addressed a poorly-attended public meeting in defiance of the prohibitory order. The meeting was also addressed by Maulvi Noor-ur-Din and Agha Shaukat Ali. Mir Waiz Sahib attended the meeting which by itself meant defiance of the order, because in the eyes of law, it was an unlawful assembly. The Government acted swiftly and arrested Chaudhri Ghulam Abbas Khan, Maulvi Noor-ud-Din, Agha Shaukat Ali, Khawaja Mohammad Ismail Saghar and Khawaja Ghulam Mohi-ud-Din Rehbar. Mr. A.R. Saghar was also arrested though he did not attend the meeting. Mr. Ismail Saghar and Khawaja Ghulam Mohi-ud-Din Rehbar, prominent members from Srinagar, were arrested because they had been advocating a general Civil Disobedience Movement. Discussing the decision to go to jail, Chaudhri Ghulam Abbas Khan says:

> "Any way, the longing to go to jail seized me again. The same night in the open session, by defying restrictions imposed by the Government, Agha Shaukat Ali and Maulvi Noor-ud-Din also got themselves

1 Azad Kashmir Radio Broadcast.

arrested. In my speech I explained the reasons for individual civil disobedience, issued stern instructions to workers that in no case should they participate in the civil disobedience and thus act against the discipline of the Party but should prepare themselves to face the result of constitutional talks that were going on and also prove their strength in the coming elections to the Assembly. It was intriguing that while Mir Waiz Yusuf Shah who had fully participated in the unlawful open session was not arrested while Mr. Saghar who had, under my instructions, remained miles away from the pendal, was arrested alongwith myself from my residence the same night."[1]

Comments Pandit Prem Nath Bazaz:—

"Should the Conference quietly accept the orders of the authorities and postpone the session to a future date or should defy the ban and hold the session whatever the consequences? Opinion was divided in the High Command. Statesmanship demanded the adoption of the former course but extremists insisted on the latter. And Ghulam Abbas, never noted for far-sight, balance or moderation, led the extremists who won the day. A poorly attended meeting was held at Jamia Masjid on the 24th of October where Abbas delivered a demagogic speech bitterly criticising the authorities for refusing permission to the Muslim Conference to hold its session. Presumably conscious of his own weakness and the rifts within the ranks of his organisation, he advised his colleagues not to follow him by continuing defiance of law. There appeared to be no sense in what he was doing but yet he was doing it. Next day the Government arrested four top ranking leaders of the Muslim Conference—Abbas, Agha Shaukat, Allah Rakha Saghar and Noor-ud-Din. They were all kept in detention.

The lead given by Abbas as we shall see presently proved really suicidal for the Muslim Conference and catastrophic for the country in general and the State Muslims in particular. It exposed the weaknesses of the Muslim Conference organisation and the inefficiency, incapability and unintelligence of its leadership. Soon after the arrests, Mir Waiz Yusuf and Hamidullah started quarrelling with each other as to who was to be the head of the Conference in the absence of Abbas. Both claimed to have received letters from their imprisoned chief nominating either as his successor. Unsurprisingly, the followers of the Muslim Conference were utterly disgusted with the puerile and cantankerous behaviour of their leaders. The imprisonment of Muslim Conference leaders at a time when Quit Kashmir

1 Autobiography, p. 325.

agitation was virtually dead and the unseemly quarrel between Mir Waiz Yusuf Shah and Hamidullah strengthened the position of the Nationalists and their organisation. It contributed to the great misfortune that befell Kashmir next year at the partition of the sub-continent. The seeds of disorganisation and chaos which are in evidence in Muslim Conference ranks at present on both sides of the cease-fire line, were sown by Abbas and his close associates through this bankrupt policy."[1]

Looking from the historical perspective, the decision was undoubtedly short-sighted and disastrous. It not only resulted in a division in its ranks and disaster at the polls but also deprived it of its top leadership at a time when the sub-continent was going through the pangs of the transfer of power and its two principal nations were on the verge of a civil war. However, criticism by certain elements that if at all Chaudhri Ghulam Abbas felt it necessary to launch a movement, he should not have confined it to his own imprisonment, is not fair because he was aware, more than anybody else, of the inherent weakness of the Party. It was really not in a position to launch an impressive Civil Disobedience Movement; the Party organisation everywhere was in a mess. Had a call been given for a general disobedience, not many persons would have offered themselves for arrest. Students of history can recall that even in the gigantic movement of 1931, the Movement remained largely confined to Kashmir valley and Mirpur district; except for Jammu city or an incident or two in Rajouri, it made practically no impact in other parts of Jammu province. There were many reasons for that, the main reasons being that means of communication were difficult outside Kashmir valley; the number of non-Mu.lims inhabiting these parts was far larger; they were at the same time far more powerful and aggressive, than in the Valley. The Party position in Kashmir valley was still more unhappy. With Mir Waiz Mohammad Yusuf Shah opposed to the proposed Movement, the Muslim Conference could have been hardly able to send even a dozen worker to jail. Therefore, while it is easy to criticise the decision of Chaudhri Ghulam Abbas Khan, it is only fair to consider it in the light of the circumstances under which the decision was taken by him.

With the arrest of Chaudhri Ghulam Abbas, leading members of the Muslim Conference expected their own arrest but Kak was too clever for them. By arresting its top leadership, he had already dealt it a severe blow and there was no need for him to fear those few who were left out. Chaudhry Hameedullah Khan, as Acting President left for Lahore where he was joined by Syed Nazir Hussain Shah from

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1 Freedom Struggle, p. 266.

Poonch, Khawaja Sana Ullah Shamim from Sopore and Chaudhry Rahim Dad Khan from Kotli, all practising lawyers. They went to Delhi to meet the Quaid-e-Azam who after ensuring their bonafides through Mr. K.H. Khurshid, granted them an interview. The Quaid-e-Azam clearly was unhappy with the decision of Chaudhri Ghulam Abbas Khan to get himself arrested and told the deputationists that this had happened contrary to his directions. He told them that at a time when momentous decisions were being taken with regard to the transfer of power by the British, there was no sense in either launching a movement or going to jail. Syed Nazir Hussain Shah has told this writer that Quaid-e-Azam also told them that Kak was a very clever man and compared him to a hedge-hog. It is an insectivorous mammal; its peculiarity is that its hair on the upper part of the body is mixed with prickles or spines. It is able to roll itself up so as to present the spines outwardly in every direction. The Quaid-e-Azam then told them of an incident which is reproduced below:

> The Quaid-e-Azam was sitting one day in his house in New Delhi when suddenly a snake, pursued by a hedge-hog, appeared from some corner. The hedge-hog gave a little bite to the snake who being provoked, turned back to punish the aggressor. The hedge-hog rolled itself up presenting its prickles to the snake who was unwittingly injured and turned back in pain but the hedge-hog again bite him on the tail with the result that the snake was again provoked to counter attack and as happened before, the cunning mammal hid its head and rolling itself, presented the prickles. The snake was again injured. Meanwhile the bearer came with tea and finding a snake wanted to kill it but was prevented by the Quaid-e-Azam. In a few minutes the snake was dead.

The Quaid-e-Azam told the deputationists that Kak resembled the hedge-hog; he first provoked Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah and put him in jail alongwith his entire party and now he had succeeded in provoking Chaudhri Ghulam Abbas Khan. The Quaid-e-Azam advised them to return to the State and do their best to win as many Assembly seats as possible.

Chaudhry Hameedullah Khan accompanied by his colleagues then came to Aligarh where Kashmiri students invited them to tea. The University Union arranged a meeting in the Union Hall which was addressed by him. Chaudhry Hameedullah made an impressive and admirable speech in English.

With the arrest of these leaders, Muslim Conference was divided into two camps, one led by Chaudhry Hameedullah Khan and the other by Mir Waiz Mohammad Yusuf Shah, each claiming to be the Acting

President of the Party on the basis of communications allegedly received by each from Chaudhri Ghulam Abbas. In his autobiography, Chaudhri Sahib has clinched the controversy by stating that he had nominated the former. As a result of the division, the branches at Srinagar, Shopian and Bijbihara broke away from the Centre and the faction headed by Chaudhry Hameedullah was practically non-existent in Kashmir valley. The division inflicted such a blow to its prestige that in the elections to the Legislative Assembly held in January, 1947, not many people cared to apply for its ticket and even those who joined it after election, because of its pro-Pakistan policy, had contested as independents. In Srinagar city, polling took place only in the Amira Kadal constituency where late Khawaja Ghulam Nabi Gilkar, despite being an Ahmedi, was able to defeat, due to his pro-Pakistan platform, his opponent Mr. Ghulam Ahmed Kala in a straight fight. In Baramula, Khawaja Inayatullah Kakru was returned unopposed. In Sopore, there was a straight fight between Khawaja Ghulam Mohi-ud-Din, petition-writer and Khawaja Habibullah Faktoo. The former was an old political worker and belonged to the Muslim Conference while the latter fought the election as a loyalist. The latter succeeded and joined the Government benches. In Muzaffarabad Mian Ahmad Yar, the P.W.D. Minister, was declared elected unopposed as the nomination papers of his opponents were rejected by the S.D.M. It was alleged that these had been illegally rejected.

Pandit Ram Chandra Kak floated a political party of his own named "The All Jammu and Kashmir State People's Conference". Its President Mr. Mustafa Malik, a middle-class landlord from Islamabad, was also elected.

Speaking about the party and Mustafa Malik, Kak told Bazaz:

> "Kashmir people need an organisation of highly moral and incorruptible men. I am convinced the new Conference will meet the demand. The leaders so far in the field have been weighed and found wanting. I do not believe there is any other public man comparable with Mustafa Malik in honesty, in his devotion to public service and cause of the poor."[1]

Kak may not have been far wrong when he spoke so eloquently of the honesty and integrity of Mustafa Malik but it was too much to have expected of him to set up a successful parallel leadership against the National Conference and the Muslim Conference. It was certainly beyond his capacity. He was a good and dedicated political worker but with Kak as Boss, the Party was doomed to a failure. Mustafa Malik migrated to

1 Freedom Struggle, p. 267.

Pakistan in 1948 but returned a few years later due to neglect and poverty. Towards the end of 1946, Mian Ahmad Yar set up an "All Jammu and Kashmir Voters Conference". It failed to make any impact at all, especially because of his having betrayed his Party only for a cabinet post a few months earlier.

At about the sametime, serious incidents took place in the village, Warapura, about two to three miles from Sopore towards Bandipura. Thakar Kartar Singh, a retired Revenue Minister and a close relative of Hari Singh held it as Jagir. Towards the middle of 1946, when the peasants refused to pay his share in the produce mainly due to growing economic distress, Kartar Singh began harassing the tenants, some of whom were arrested and against some others, proceedings were instituted for ejectment or realisation of rent. The cases were numerous but unfortunately no practising lawyer at Sopore was prepared to accept their brief largely because the bar was monopolised by Hindus. Khawaja Sana-Ullah Shamim had only a year before started practice after having passed his M.A. and LL.B. from Aligarh. Born in Sopore in or about 1923, he did his B.A. from Srinagar. Interested in politics from his college days, he was a prominent member of the Young Socialist League set up in 1942 by Pandit Prem Nath Bazaz. Later he was elected Vice President of the Muslim Students Federation. After return from Aligarh, he joined the Muslim Conference and was nominated a member of the Working Committee in August, 1946. A shrewd political worker, he is known for his sense of humour and great presence of mind. Very cool headed, he is considered not only a front-rank political worker on this side of the Ceasefire line but also an asset for the Party or group to which he may owe his allegiance. He took up the defence of the tenants and also wrote to newspapers about the reign of terror let loose by the local administration in the village at the behest of the land-lord. He was arrested under Defence Rules and lodged in Srinagar Central Jail where hundreds of National Conference workers were being already detained. He was released after nearly four months detention.

MUSLIM CONFERENCE DEMANDS ACCESSION TO PAKISTAN

The Cabinet Mission ater having failed to secure an agreement between Congress and Muslim League, formulated its proposals which were announced on 16th May. The plan envisaged the creation of three groups of Provinces. Group B comprised Punjab, Sind, Baluchistan and N.W.F.P.; group C comprised Bengal and Assam while the rest of British India was grouped together as A; there was to be a Federal Government at the Centre dealing only with Defence, Foreign Affairs and Communications, with limited financial powers; all residue powers were to be exercised by the groups.

Ten years after the promulgation of the Constitution, any State could opt out of the group and similarly, any group could ask for a reconsideration of its relations with the Centre. Representation in the Central Legislature was to be on the basis of population but certain safeguards were provided to protect important questions affecting Muslims.

The Congress accepted the proposals; so did the Muslim League but the sacrifice thus made by Muslim League for the sake of an over-all agreement with Congress was not appreciated by the latter and instead of using it as an opportunity to make a cordial beginning by acknowledging the statesmanship of the Quaid-e-Azam, the Congress press interpreted League's acceptance as a defeat and hurled abuses on its leaders. Lamenting this attitude, Sir Arthur Moor, a former Editor of the Statesman, stated in a letter to the paper:—

> "The Muslim League alone had accepted the long term and the short term plan and for the sake of peace had agreed to try out a Federal form of Government and forgo the idea of a sovereign independent Pakistan. No glimmer of thanks or gratitude reached them. From the Hindu press, rose a roar of triumph that the League was beaten and day after day a study stream of insult and cartoon poured forth."[1]

After having accepted the proposals, the Congress beat a hasty retreat through a press statement of its unpredictable and mercury-natured President, Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru. He told a press conference in Bombay on 10th July that the Congress would enter the Consembly completely unfettered by agreements and free to meet all situations as they arise. He also said emphatically that the Congress had agreed only to participation in the Constituent Assembly and regarded itself free to change or modify the Cabinet Mission plan as it thought best. Says Maulana Azad:—

> "I must place on record that Jawaharlal's statement was wrong. It was not correct to say that Congress was free to modify the plan as it pleased. We had in fact agreed that the central Government would be federal. There would be compulsory list of three central subjects while all other subjects remained in the provincial sphere. We had further agreed that there could be three sections, viz A, B and C in which the provinces would be grouped. These matters could not be changed unilaterally by Congress without the consent of other parties to the agreement."[2]

1 India Wins Freedom, p. 155.
2 Cabinet Mission and After, p. 386.

The proposals also envisaged the setting up of an interim Government at the Centre. The Cabinet Mission appears to have undertaken that the party which accepted the proposals in their entirety would be called upon to form an interim Government. Obviously it was intended to make the basic constitutional proposal attractive and operated as a lever against its rejection. After Congress staged a volte face, the Muslim League should have been invited to form the interim Government but the British Government was in no mood to honour its solemn pledge. The Muslim League had, therefore, no alternative but to reconsider its decision and in a special Convention held at Bombay on 27th July, 1946, it withdrew its earlier acceptance and resolved that nothing short of a straight division of the sub-continent would be acceptable to it. To put teeth into the decision, the League Council called upon Muslims to renounce their British titles and observe the 16th of August, 1946 as a Direct Action Day. Muslims were asked to take a solemn resolve on that day to sacrifice anything for the achievement of Pakistan. At that time, Mr. Hussain Shaheed Suhrawardy headed the Muslim League Ministry in Bengal. Hindus who were unhappy with him, created vast disturbances in Calcutta resulting in unprecedented rioting. The number of dead is estimated to have been in thousands. This brought about a climate of civil war and the British Government in pursuance of its secret understanding with the Congress, invited Nehru to form an Interim Government which included Muslim show-boys like Ali Zaheer and Sir Shafaat Ahmad Khan. To have deprived the Muslim League of its right to form the Interim Government, was by itself an injury but to have invited the Congress which had repudiated its acceptance of the plan, to do so amounted to adding insult to injury. A deep wave of indignation swept through Muslim India and it became clear that a total civil war was not only at hand but that it was being deliberately forced upon Muslims by the Anglo-Hindu axis.

Calcutta riots were followed by large scale killing of Muslims in Bihar and Gurmuktesar. It had its reactions in Noakhali in Bengal. Then there were riots in Bombay, C.P., Punjab and Hazara. It was clear now to both the Congress and their British benefactors that without conceding Pakistan, the sub-continent was destined to fall a prey to unprecedented bloodshed, the result of which no one could definitely predict. Wavell was succeeded by Lord Mountbatten. He was clothed with sweeping powers by the Labour Government to evolve an agreed formula in consultation with Congress—League leaders for the transfer of power. The Labour Government also decided tentatively to transfer power by June, 1948.

In early 1947, Wavell, accompanied by the Quaid-e-Azam representing the Muslim League, Pandit Nehru representing the Congress and Baldev

Singh representing the Sikhs, left for England for constitutional talks with the Labour Government. They stopped for an overnight stay at Malta. This writer has been told by Mr. K.H. Khurshid, who was accompanying the Quaid-e-Azam as his Private Secretary, that late in the evening Quaid-e-Azam who was staying next door to Pandit Nehru asked him to find out whether Pandit Nehru and Baldev Singh were comfortably settled.

As a result of the negotiations in London, the British Government announced its plan for the partition of the sub-continent since known as the 3rd June Plan. It provided for what is known as a truncated Pakistan because Punjab and Bengal were also partitioned and instead of giving the whole of Assam to Pakistan, as envisaged in the original demand, only the Muslim majority Sylhet district was to opt for Pakistan and that too after a referendum. In the N.W.F.P. also a referendum was to be held to decide as to whether the people wanted to join India or Pakistan.

With the announcement of the plan, political activity increased manifold. The Muslims of Jammu and Kashmir were naturally anxious and worried about their future partly because they very well knew the pro-Congress leanings of the Dogra House but largely because the partition of Punjab and Mountbatten's announcement hinting at the partition of Gurdaspur district were ominous signs which were deeply disturbing. Muslims now universally realised that accession to Pakistan could alone ensure their safety and well-being. Meanwhile non-Muslim refugees from N.W.F.P., Rawalpindi, Sialkot, Jhelum, Gujrat and Campbellpur were entering the State through all possible routes and were being housed in Muzaffarabad, Baramula, Srinagar, Jammu, Batote and Udhampur. They included members of the notorious R.S.S. Master Tara Singh and Doctor Harnam Singh of the Akali Dal visited Muzaffarabad in January, 1947 ostensibly to meet Hindu and Sikh refugees from Hazara and Rawalpindi. They addressed a public meeting, held under the auspices of the Singh Sabha despite Rule 50 of the Defence Rules being in force. They made highly inflammatory anti-Muslim speeches but no action was taken against them or the organisers. A deputation of Muslim lawyers travelled to Srinagar and waited upon Pandit Ram Chandra Kak to complain against the partiality of the local administration but to no effect.

What was to be done by the Muslim Conference under these circumstances? Had Chaudhri Ghulam Abbas Khan been out of jail, the Party may have played at least some important role at this critical juncture. But unfortunately he had allowed himself to be provoked by Kak and landed himself in jail.

The June 3rd Plan had viciously and undemocratically empowered the Princes to decide the question of their States' accession to Pakistan or India though it was obvious that they had to take into consideration the surrounding circumstances such as its geographic placement, economic compulsions and the wishes of its inhabitants. Two factors existing at the moment were prima facie of importance to Pakistan. The first one was Maharaja Hari Singh's personal hatred against Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru who, it may be said to his credit, had not been very popular with the Indian Princes because as President of the All India States People's Conference, he had not only from time to time been airing grievances of their subjects but had also been occasionally attacking the Princely order itself and the treaties that protected them. Since 1940 he had been publicly supporting Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah; this support became pronounced in the Quit Kashmir Movement. At the time of the announcement of June 3rd Plan, Pandit Nehru was Head of the Congress party in the Central Cabinet and the Congress press had been styling him as Vice President of the Cabinet. It was quite apparent that Nehru was going to be not only the first Prime Minister of Congress-dominated free India but what is more, a very powerful and authoritarian one. It has also been seen in the context of the Quit Kashmir Movement that Hari Singh had in his letter to Mr. Victor dubbed him as Abdullah's Guru. His hatred for Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah was far greater and obviously the man who raised the cry of Quit Kashmir from a political platform against him resulting in a mass uprising, could not but be the object of deep distrust and despication by him. Therefore, despite being pronouncedly pro-Congress and inherently and basically tied to the wheel of Hindu India, he was wavering in his mind about the State's ultimate political affiliation. In his heart of hearts, he may have, perhaps—I would like to emphasise the word 'perhaps'—impulsively wanted to accede to India but the above fears engendered on account of Nehru's power and prestige and the human instinct of self-preservation pulled its weight against an immediate decision of accession to India. Then there was Pandit Ram Chandra Kak. He was hated by Nehru for having injured his vanity by banning his entry and even putting the mighty Pandit under detention and compelled him to return to Delhi without realising his publicly declared determination of proceeding to Srinagar. He was also worried that accession to India would bring the Nationalists to power and not only slaughter his political ambitions but also lead to his disgrace. He also seemed to believe that accession to Pakistan was economically imperative and perhaps, as a son of the soil with no sentimental attachment to Congress-led Hindu India, was interested in sparing his country of blood-shed, insecurity and economic strangulation. Perhaps these were the considerations which brought him to the conclusion that the State should accede to Pakistan but to have suggested

such a course to Hari Singh, would have been dangerous. Perhaps for this reason he appears to have been advocating a declaration of independence. Did he have any links with the League High Command? Did anyone act as an emissary between the two sides? No direct evidence has so far been forthcoming, but the attitude adopted by the Muslim Conference High Command is interesting in the matter and may indirectly throw some light on the obscure subject.

Chaudhri Ghulam Abbas and other leaders of the Muslim Conference arrested towards the end of October, 1946 had been lodged in Reasi jail. In early 1947, Chaudhri Ghulam Abbas and Mr. Saghar were shifted to Kathua jail. On 28th May, 1947, by which time it could be assumed that partition was on the anvil, Chaudhry Hameedullah Khan Acting President of the Muslim Conference, addressing a press conference at Leading Hotel Jammu, declared:—

"Accession to Pakistan would be unpleasant to Hindus while accession to India will disturb Muslims. Therefore, we have decided not to enter into any controversy either with India or Pakistan. The second thing we have decided is that we should try to acquire independence for the State. The third question now before us is what would be the position of the Maharaja? *We have never been lacking in showing loyalty and respect for him and it is because of this attachment that we did not support the Quit Kashmir movement although in one way it was a natural movement.* We, therefore, felt that we should try to find out a solution which will maintain the position of the Maharaja Bahadur while at the same time, it should also satisfy the Praja. The best solution that we have found is that the Maharaja should become a constitutional King as is the position in many other countries......The fourth thing that we have decided is that we should have a Constituent Assembly of our own to draft our Constitution. Muslim League has already boycotted the Constituent Assembly. Therefore its proposed Constitution cannot satisfy Muslims because it must have been prepared by hundred pecent Hindus. If our four representatives sit in this Assembly, they would just be wasting their time.

I have the support of all important leaders of the Muslim Conference and Chaudhri Ghulam Abbas Khan has himself expressed agreement with this proposal. A representative Convention of the Muslim Conference will be called within a month where the proposal will be unanimously adopted. So, therefore, this solution should be considered the official policy of the Muslim Conference. Muslim League has not given us this solution, nor are we presenting it to deceive the

Hindus. We have arrived at this solution in all honesty and after taking into account the local situation. The only connection that the Muslim League has with it is that the Muslim League's past and present policy of non-intervention in Indian States has strengthened us. I would like to say in all honesty that we have had no talks in this connection with any leader or worker of the Muslim League. We do not want to get any instructions from the Muslim League and Hindus should also give up being led by the Congress. The best thing for us, all, is that the League and Congress should leave us undisturbed and we should give up both the parties. When we say that we want to separate ourselves from Hindustan and Pakistan, we mean that we want to be friends with both of them but we do not want to be influenced by any one of them. We would have political as well as economic relations with both. We think that we will have good relations with Pakistan and in the presence of the Hindu ruling dynasty, we will also have pleasant relations with India."[1]

THE END

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1 Al-Islah, 5th June, 1947.



Jammu and Kashmir State